Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures

# Interconnected Traditions

## Semitic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

## A Festschrift for Geoffrey Khan

### Volume 1: Hebrew and the Wider Semitic World

Edited by Aaron D. Hornkohl, Nadia Vidro,
Janet C. E. Watson, Eleanor Coghill,
Magdalen M. Connolly, and Benjamin M. Outhwaite

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

# Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures

## General Editor: Geoffrey Khan

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# VOLUME 1

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# CONTENTS: VOLUME I

Contents: Volume I ..... v
Contents: Volume II ..... viii

Preface: A Tribute to Geoffrey Khan, Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge ..... xv

Volume I: Hebrew, Comparative Semitics, and the Semitic Languages ..... 1

A. Hebrew ..... 3

*Bo Isaksson*
Geoffrey Khan's Contribution to the Problem of Biblical Hebrew Consecutive *weqaṭal* ..... 5

*Aaron D. Hornkohl*
The Origins of *Wayyiqṭol*: A First-person Account ..... 37

*Christo van der Merwe*
Fronting in the Protases of אִם Conditionals ..... 69

*Robert S. D. Crellin*
Considerations for the Design of Dependency Treebanks for Linguistic Research in Biblical Hebrew ..... 99

*Ambjörn Sjörs*
Notes on the Reciprocal Function of *Nifʿal* in Biblical Hebrew ..... 131

*Benjamin Kantor*
Healed by 'his wound(s)', 'his bruising', or 'in his company'?: Isaiah 53.5 and *Dagesh Mavḥin* ..... 157

*Elizabeth Robar*
Why Do Psalms, Proverbs, and Job Use Different Accents? ..... 189

*Gary A. Rendsburg*
The Pronunciation of תִּזָּכְרוּ (Num. 15.40) in Rabbinic Sources and in Light of Phoenician ..... 223

*Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé and Jacobus A. Naudé*
A Case for Distributive Quantification of *kol* in Biblical Hebrew ..... 259

*Adina Moshavi*
*Kol* as a Universal Quantifier in Biblical Hebrew..... 291

*Ethan Jones*
A More Polite Suggestion: The Lengthened Imperative in Biblical Hebrew ..... 331

*Noam Mizrahi*
Lexis-coding Orthography in 4QIsa$^{m}$ (4Q66)..... 359

*Moshe Florentin*
The Vocabulary of the Samaritan Pentateuch: A General Overview..... 385

*Edward Cook*
Some Cases of Grammaticalisation in Mishnaic Hebrew and Their Diachronic Implications ..... 403

*Mila Neishtadt*
Rabbinic Hebrew *kyd* ~ *ʿkyd*: Insights from Palestinian Arabic ..... 421

*Yehudit Henshke*
The Realisation of *Ṣere* in Contemporary Hebrew: Monophthongal or Diphthongal? ..... 455

*Yaron Peleg*
The Bible and Modern Hebrew ..... 479

B. Comparative Semitics and the Semitic Languages ..... 489

*Aaron J. Koller*
Alphabetical Order and Alphabetical Thinking in the East and West: From Antiquity to the Middle Ages ..... 491

*Tania Notarius*
"Every glance of their eyes—like a flame, two flames": A Case of Ugaritic Gt *ʾmr* 'see' Reconsidered ..... 529

*Lutz Edzard*
Loan Translation or Independent Development: The Figura Etymologica in Semitic and in Yiddish ..... 555

*Simon Hopkins*
On the Pronunciation of Sacred Names ..... 577

*Benjamin Suchard*
The Shape of the Teen Numerals in Central Semitic ..... 611

*Naʿama Pat-El*
The Gender of Paired Body Parts in Semitic ..... 631

*Janet C. E. Watson*
Fieldwork: Chance, Choice, Change ..... 661

*Clive Holes*
'The Cobbler Made Money from the Town of 'Ifač': A Satirical Poem in Iraqi Arabic on Corruption in the Iraqi Parliament..... 681

*Leonid Kogan and Maria Bulakh*
Attributive Possession in Soqotri: The Evidence of the 'Vienna Corpus'..... 695

*Holger Gzella*
Christian Palestinian Aramaic between Greek and Arabic..... 747

*John Healey*
Aramaic: Lingua Franca, Koine, or Both?..... 771

*Matthew Morgenstern and Tom Alfia*
Arabic Spells against Menstrual Bleeding in Mandaic Script..... 797

*Johan Lundberg*
Dots and Word Stress in Classical East Syriac..... 821

*Ivri Bunis*
The Late Western Aramaic Suffixing of Pronominal Direct Objects via *-t-* < /yāt/..... 843

Index..... 879

## CONTENTS: VOLUME II

Contents: Volume I .....v

Contents: Volume II ..... viii

Volume II: The Medieval World, Judaeo-Arabic, and Neo-Aramaic ..... 1

C. The Medieval World and Judaeo-Arabic ..... 3

*Stefan Reif*
To What Extent is Geniza Research on Jewish Liturgy a Continuation of the Work of Leopold Zunz? ..... 5

*Aharon Maman*
New Geniza Fragments from the Commentary of R. Isaac b. Samuel al-Kanzī the Sephardi on Joshua and Judges ..... 31

*Benjamin M. Outhwaite*
The Cacophony of Colophons in the Cairo Codex of the Prophets ..... 65

*Vincent Beiler*
Does the Cairo Codex Represent a Scribal School? ..... 111

*Judith Olszowy-Schlanger*
Hebrew Script Terminology in Cairo Geniza Book Lists ..... 147

*Ronny Vollandt*
Geniza Book Lists as Indirect Sources of Medieval Jewish Book History in the Near East ..... 177

*Estara Arrant*
An Exploration of Geniza Targum Fragments as Objects of Personal Study and Everyday Use ..... 217

*Mordechai Akiva Friedman*
Two Judaeo-Arabic Letters to Abraham Maimonides: A Recommendation and a Condemnation of a Communal Leader ..... 257

*Micahel Rand z"l*
A Fragment of the *Maḥberot ʿAzarʾel ben Yosef* ..... 287

*Nick Posegay*
Some Notes on Melody: Saʿadya Gaon and Why ʻnaghmaʼ Means ʻvowelʼ in Judaeo-Arabic ..... 311

*Tamar Zewi*
"You Shall Not Boil a Kid in Its Mother's Milk" in Saʿadya Gaon's Translation of the Pentateuch ..... 341

*Ofra Tirosh-Becker*
Judaeo-Arabic Translations from the Bible to Robinson Crusoe: Centre versus Periphery ..... 363

*Wiktor Gębski*
Comparative Notes on the Jewish Arabic Dialects of Gabes and Djerba (Tunisia) ..... 399

*Benjamin Hary*
Written Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic: Implications for the Spoken Variety ..... 429

*Gregor Schwarb*
The Arabic Counterpart of the Byzantine Karaite Treatise *Marpe la-ʿAṣem* ..... 459

*Miriam Goldstein*
Early Tenth-Century Judaeo-Arabic Exegesis on the Visit to Abraham ..... 489

*Nadia Vidro*
Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ and Yūsuf ibn Baḫtawayh: One Grammarian or Two? ..... 523

*José Martínez Delgado*
A Lexicographical Analysis of *Sharḥ al-ʾAlfāẓ* by Abū al-Faraj Hārūn (*Parashat Bereshit*) ..... 547

*Diana Lipton and Meira Polliack*
Wrestlers before the King: Image and Text in Ancient and Medieval Representations of the First Murder ..... 575

D. Neo-Aramaic ..... 611

*Steven E. Fassberg*
Neo-Aramaic 2MS and 2FS Genitive Pronominal Suffixes in the Light of Earlier Aramaic ..... 613

*Samuel Fox*
Being Born in Neo-Aramaic ..... 627

*Alessandro Mengozzi*
Not Such a Dummy or Otiose After All: NENA Verbs with Non-referential 3FS Object Pronouns ..... 645

*Phillip Yu. Burlakov, Anna S. Cherkashina, Charles G. Häberl, and Sergey V. Loesov*
The Church Militant: A Modern Western Aramaic Account ..... 667

*Otto Jastrow*
A Syriac Christian in the Turkish Military: A Text in the Ṭuroyo Dialect of Midin ..... 693

*Charles G. Häberl*
War and Fieldwork..... 711

*Dorota Molin*
Indefiniteness Marking: NENA and Its Areal and Semitic Parallels ..... 727

*Paul M. Noorlander*
Miracles of Saint Ephrem: Legends in the Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Umra d-Shish ..... 753

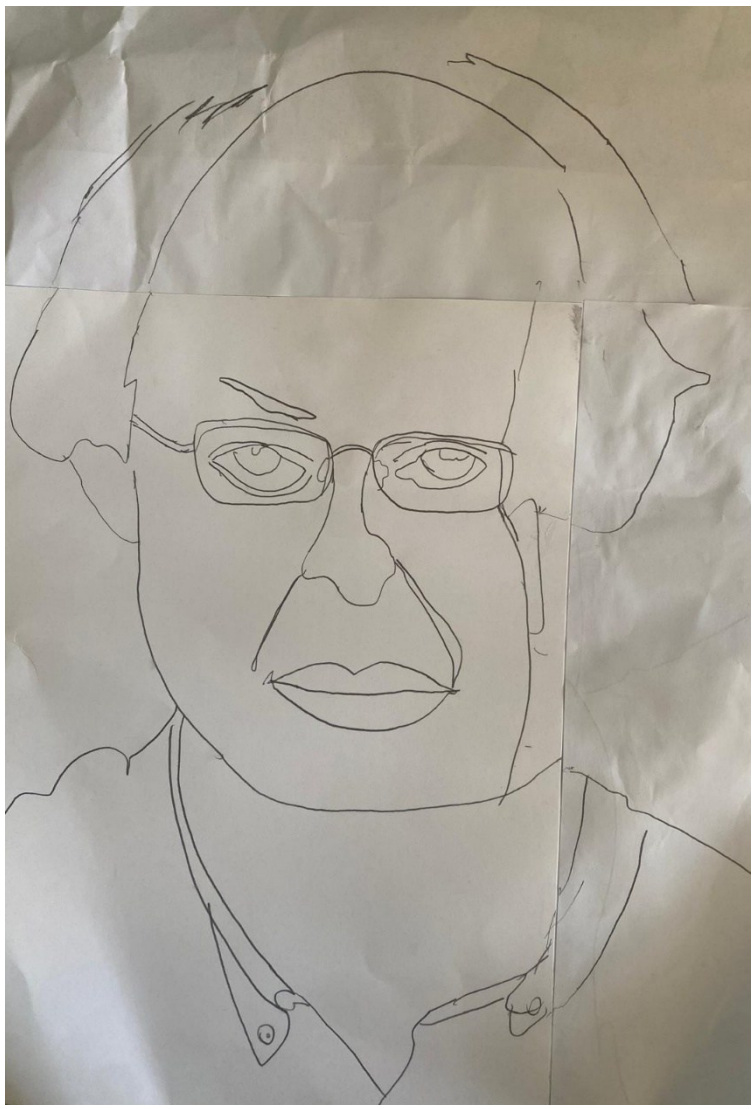
*Lidia Napiorkowska*
Relating Morphological and Sociolinguistic Variety in Modern Hebrew to Neo-Aramaic..... 791

*Eleanor Coghill*
The North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Tin ..... 823

*Hezy Mutzafi*
Five Enigmatic Neo-Aramaic Lexemes and Their Possible Etymologies..... 863

*Werner Arnold*
Animals in the Western Neo-Aramaic Proverbs of Maʿlūla..... 891

Index..... 899



A drawing of Geoffrey Khan, by Yoel Hornkohl, 17 September 2024

# PREFACE: A TRIBUTE TO GEOFFREY KHAN, REGIUS PROFESSOR OF HEBREW, CAMBRIDGE

I am given to understand that this is the third Festschrift prepared in Geoffrey's honour. The first was an informal, in-house anthology prepared by Geoffrey's graduate students to mark his fiftieth birthday. The second was *Studies in Semitic Linguistics and Manuscripts: A Liber Discipulorum in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Khan* (Uppsala University Library, 2018). Edited by four of Geoffrey's former PhD students, containing 21 articles by former students and colleagues, and running 467 pages, it was presented to Geoffrey on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday.

The secret project known by the impenetrable codename *GKFS25* began in the spring of 2021. I had previously been approached by a post-doc and former student of Geoffrey's, Magdalen Connolly, with the idea that we start preparing a Festschrift to mark his retirement. A committee of area editors was formed, and we began soliciting contributions. Four years later, we have finally seen its publication. The present work, comprising two volumes each running to nearly a thousand pages, presents over 60 contributions representing the efforts of nearly 70 contributors, including colleagues present and past, near and far, among them many former students of Geoffrey's. The size, scope, and topical diversity of the work, the number of editorial and contributing participants, and the open-access nature of the publication are all testament to Geoffrey's unique scholarly and personal

attributes, which can, at the risk of oversimplification, be distilled into two: world-leading expertise in multiple fields and personal care for students and colleagues.

The journey to publication has been an extended one. Along the way, among those involved—honouree, editors, contributors—we have witnessed births, marriages, appointments, promotions, retirements, moves, arrivals, fresh starts, publications, awards, and the founding and deepening of bonds. We have also seen or experienced death, bereavement, illness, the effects of pandemic and war, departures, disappointment, fallings out, and separation. It may be tempting to recall the former, and leave the latter unmentioned. But having experienced the lot, we surely cheat ourselves out of the full effect if we shy away from acknowledging the ups with the downs, even if the associated feelings are a mixture of bitter and sweet. The adjective *interconnected*, used in the title to describe the linguistic, literary, and cultural traditions that Geoffrey's work has so illuminated, is also an apt descriptor of the people whom he has touched.

## 1.0. Geoffrey Khan's Biography

Geoffrey Allan Khan was born in Cheltenham, England, 1 February 1958, but was brought up in his formative years in Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire. His background was mixed: English mother, South Asian father of Iranian descent; Muslim paternal grandfather who married a Catholic; a paternal great-grandmother who was the daughter of a Welsh Wesleyan missionary; and Geoffrey also has Native American ancestry in his DNA. De-

spite being known to some of his Israel-based language informants as *Alon Cohen* (≈ Allan Khan; *Geoffrey* is hard for some to pronounce), he has no known Jewish heritage. His parents separated when he was young, and he was raised by his mother and grandmother. He attended a comprehensive school, where, due in part to frequent playground violence and racial abuse, he, in his own words, "took refuge in learning languages." One of his first loves was Italian, a language in which he remains sufficiently proficient to communicate effectively in both spoken and written form. Over the course of his teenage years, he collected a wide range of 'Teach Yourself' books in every language from Samoan to Finnish. These volumes still grace his bookshelves to this day.

Relatives encouraged Geoffrey to pursue studies in Law or Medicine, as they equated such career paths with success. But Geoffrey was interested in languages—the more exotic, the better—which led him to the Semitic languages, with their distinctive scripts.

Geoffrey studied for a BA degree in Semitic Languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Akkadian, Ethiopic) at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, which he completed in 1980. He went on, thereafter, to graduate studies in the same institution and was awarded a PhD in 1984 for a thesis entitled 'Extraposition and Pronominal Agreement in Semitic languages', which concerned the form and function of various syntactic structures in Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian and Amharic. This was subsequently published as his first monograph, *Studies in Semitic Syntax* (Oxford University Press, 1988). This established Geoffrey as a respected Semitist.

Geoffrey met Colette, his wife, at SOAS, where she was also studying. In 1983 he moved to Cambridge to take up a post-doctoral research position in the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit (GRU) at Cambridge University Library. Geoffrey and Colette married in January 1984. They would eventually adopt two children, Hannah and Jonathan. Hannah and partner Matt and Jonathan and partner Giovanna have to date provided Geoffrey and Colette with a granddaughter each, Sofia and Giorgia, respectively.

Geoffrey would spend ten years working in the GRU, 1983–1987 as Research Assistant and 1987–1993 as Research Associate. His employment during this time felt rather precarious, as it involved one-year contracts that required renewal from year to year, and he supplemented his income through other work in the University. The experience of being dependent on temporary contracts was to have a profound effect on Geoffrey, giving him a special sensitivity to a situation often faced by young scholars. Many of his students, colleagues, and others have benefited over the years from his concern and practical efforts to further their careers.

The ten years spent as a post-doctoral researcher were decisive for Geoffrey's career. In his Geniza work, he gained skills, knowledge, and perspective through familiarity with a trove of authentic source material in numerous languages and got to assess critically the textbook learning to which he had been exposed in his undergraduate days (more on this below). The time also did nothing to diminish his love for languages and ancient sources. In a famous photograph (reproduced in volume II, page

2), Solomon Schechter sits examining a Geniza document, surrounded by crates of manuscripts. Geoffrey has confessed more than once that his early dream was "to be that man."

Yet, though perhaps tendentially introverted, Geoffrey is no recluse. Indeed, a significant portion of his scholarship depends on engaging with people. In the early 1990s, Geoffrey spent a year in Jerusalem, where he would often devote hours to poring over medieval manuscripts preserved on microfilm at what was then called the Jewish National and University Library (today's National Library of Israel). As intriguing as the research proved, Geoffrey felt the need for diversion from the long and solitary days in the bowels of the library. Having come across Neo-Aramaic-speakers in London and aware of the presence of communities in Jerusalem, he endeavoured to seek some out. His method? Looking up the surname *Arbel* in the telephone directory and phoning up one number after another. But since *Arbel* can derive from either the name of the northern Iraqi city Erbil (from which a community of Neo-Aramaic-speaking Jews had immigrated to Israel) or the name of a mountain in the Galilee, it took several attempts before he found a speaker of Neo-Aramaic. So began a career-long interest in the study and preservation of endangered living Semitic languages to accompany Geoffrey's deep and lasting interest in ancient Semitic tongues. His manuscript-based scholarship was now significantly augmented to include data from language survey conducted in such far-flung places as Iraq and Tbilisi, Chicago and Turlock, and several Jerusalem taxis (often driven by Neo-Aramaic

speakers). Attempting to find one such village, he and co-researchers were even temporarily detained by authorities for having unwittingly crossed an international border!

By the end of his post-doctoral days, Geoffrey had already made a name for himself in research on, *inter alia*, Semitics, the Cairo Geniza, Judaeo-Arabic, medieval grammatical traditions, Masoretic studies, and modern Aramaic. In 1993, he was appointed Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic in what was then called the Faculty of Oriental Studies (today's Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies), University of Cambridge. In 1999, he was promoted to Reader in Semitic Philology; in 2002, to Professor in Semitic Philology. He was elected Regius Professor of Hebrew in 2012.

While many of Geoffrey's academic achievements are well documented, his hobbies and pastimes are somewhat less well known. Among other things, he served as a bellringer in the University's parish church, Great St Mary's. At school he was a very promising athlete and over the past couple of years he has become an avid rower. This surely marks an improvement in Geoffrey's river-going prowess in comparison to the time he took a relative out punting and gave her concussion with the pole!

## 2.0. Significance of Geoffrey's Contributions

Geoffrey Khan has written, edited, co-written, or co-edited more than thirty books and has over two-hundred articles to his name. These broadly cover Semitics, medieval manuscripts, Arabic papyri and documents, Neo-Aramaic, medieval reading and grammatical traditions, exegesis, Judaeo-Arabic, and ancient Hebrew. Unsurprisingly, some of the more common descriptions one hears

from people familiar with Geoffrey and his work laud the multiplicity of areas in which he has made significant scholarly contributions. His work ethic also often gets mentioned: speedy editorial turn arounds and emails written in the wee hours. Others remark on his kindness and humanity, the way he has proactively looked out for his students, junior colleagues, and others. In all of these and other ways Geoffrey has been an exemplary, if not exactly imitable, role model. Yet he is also characterised by an attribute no less important, but somewhat less discussed: *subversiveness*.

One of Geoffrey's most oft repeated pieces of advice is continually to question accepted theories. Far from a sweeping rejection of the achievements of past scholars, this attitude seems rather to reflect an insatiable hunger for truth coupled with an unwillingness to be content with anything less than genuinely satisfying and comprehensive explanations of the data. Geoffrey does not come across as someone inherently adventurous or rebellious, but his quiet and unrelenting commitment to deep understanding has inevitably made him into what is today called a *disruptor*, challenging aspects of conventional wisdom and received opinion in every academic domain to which he has turned his hand. Ironically, some of this subversive disruption has involved reassessment of scholarly distrust of ancient tradition, which Geoffrey takes more seriously than many others, seeking to explain rather than explain away.

The effects of the shake-up that Geoffrey has brought to the many fields in which he has been active promises to endure. Indeed, if the shortlist of candidates for Geoffrey's replacement as Regius Professor can be taken as evidence, his very election to

the post and subsequent tenure are one more step in the upsetting of centuries of tradition with regard to the role. For the first time in history, the list included no one from the UK, but did include two women, three Jews, and four nationalities.

Here follow a few further examples of Geoffrey's disruptive or innovative scholarly approaches.

As a student of Biblical Hebrew, Geoffrey has taken more seriously than many the importance of the medieval lenses through which most biblical pronunciation and grammar are viewed. Dissatisfied with standard accounts of the received Tiberian reading tradition—since these did not align with contemporary medieval descriptions of the pronunciation—he almost literally rewrote the book on the oral realisation of Tiberian Hebrew, and has continued to work to expand knowledge of this and other medieval reading traditions and to explore their historical depth.

Similarly, and not surprisingly, Geoffrey has stressed the importance of working not from printed editions, but from authentic medieval sources, including those not entirely in line with the so-called standard or received traditions. For example, this has helped to familiarise academic readership with the diversity of ancient, medieval, and modern biblical reading traditions, including variety among manuscripts of a given tradition.

Somewhat relatedly, Geoffrey is neither pure philologist nor pure (modern) linguist, but readily derives benefit from both emphases: expertise in the language, and all that goes into its representation in old texts, coupled with openness to insights from crosslinguistic investigations of related and unrelated languages, living and dead. Though not without his own theoretical

preferences (when a language informant-colleague expressed unfamiliarity with Chomsky, Geoffrey replied that she hadn't missed much), Geoffrey fruitfully engages with linguists of all stripes! This, along with his knowledge of modern Semitic languages, especially Neo-Aramaic, has led him to innovative theories to explain pre-modern language and texts by reference to the recycling of phenomena.

And, of course, the significance of his academic contributions extends beyond the academy. He has rather impressed scholarly and non-scholarly audiences alike with his proficiency in the modern versions of the languages he studies, whether Hebrew, Assyrian (Neo-Aramaic), or Arabic.

As enjoyable as Geoffrey finds investigating and describing the intricacies of the Neo-Aramaic lexicon and grammar, he has played a pivotal role in cataloguing priceless linguistic and extralinguistic heritage on the verge of oblivion, which Geoffrey himself has described as no less important than the material cultural products that one often finds displayed in museums.

While not exactly a techie, Geoffrey was an early adopter of the computer and other technological advances and has sought to collaborate with tech-savvy students and colleagues and to promote their research. He remains amazingly receptive to new and different approaches to old problems and is often ahead of his time in the ability to grasp the potential of new technologies. Never jealous of recognition, he regularly partners with colleagues at various career stages, not just mentoring, but gratefully profiting from the exchange of perspectives and ideas.

## 3.0. Impact on the Academic Community

It is difficult to overstate Geoffrey's impact on the academic community. As outlined in the previous section, the significance of his scholarly contributions, measured in terms of the fields in which he has been active, entails influence over many researchers in diverse domains. Not only this, but, as may be gleaned from the affiliations of contributors to this Festschrift, Geoffrey's former students are strategically placed in academic positions around the world in the various disciplines in which he has worked and continue to produce first-rate scholarship, effectively disseminating *Khanesque* approaches and ideas.

Yet, not all of Geoffrey's impact is given to simple quantification. Take, by way of example, his generosity with time, which though always characteristic, has been particularly evident in the few years leading up to his retirement. While shepherding his own graduate students to complete their dissertations and wrapping up collaborative post-doctoral research projects in an effort to wind down his formal scholarly activities, several unforeseen colleague deaths and/or departures in Cambridge and farther afield would culminate in offers on Geoffrey's part to fill in as supervisor. That Geoffrey was *qualified* to do this in several fields is testament to the range of his scholarly expertise; that he was *willing* to do it is testament to the humanity that so defines him.

Geoffrey has approached research, teaching, supervision, and administration with profound humility, exhibited in many ways. On several occasions while debating his and other approaches to linguistic issues, he has been heard to say, "But I

might be wrong!" Another way this comes out: Geoffrey will listen and ask questions, but is often slow to disagree or correct outright, and never insists others adopt his view. This is due partly to his non-confrontational disposition, coupled, I think, with the patient optimism that understanding and agreement may come with time and repeated exposure, and, again, the aforementioned humility that allows him to appreciate his own benefit from exchange with students and colleagues. But more often, of course, it is we interlocutors who benefit, often after the extended time and exposure it takes to wrap our heads around Geoffrey's ideas.

Geoffrey's humility, patience, and non-confrontational manner also have their disadvantages. Some can find him initially inscrutable. More than one PhD student, post-doc, and colleague has come away from a meeting with Geoffrey uncertain as to his opinion of their work. Only after multiple meetings do we realise that we are unlikely to receive any critique clearer than a few questions or brief remarks and the suggestion of a pertinent article. But, again, this is not mere amicability on Geoffrey's part, or a desire to avoid offense, but also a deep conviction that the research is ours and that it is not his place to impose his views upon us.

Among other things, Geoffrey has also excelled at grant capture, heading up numerous collaborative research schemes with local and distant co-researchers. His regular invitations to speak, contribute a study, or assess academic work also constitute important forms of scholarly impact. Among other things, he is a member of the British Academy and the Academy of the Hebrew

Language, and has served as President of the British & Irish Association for Jewish Studies, as an External Assessor of Hebrew Graduate Programmes for the Israeli Institute for Higher Education, and as General Editor of the *Journal of Semitic Studies*, the *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, the forthcoming *Cambridge Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, and the series in which this Festschrift has been published, *Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures*. These last two works showcase a final dimension of Geoffrey's impact via his commitment to maximum accessibility to the fruits of research, manifested most practically in his establishment of important open-access resources with Open Book Publishers. For example, since the 2020 publication of the inaugural volume in the *Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures*, 35 further works have been published, embodying Geoffrey's vision for increased exposure of the Semitic world far beyond the confines of traditional academic audiences, including, and in particular, allowing communities from the Middle East and beyond easy access to work that describes their languages and cultures.

When it comes to post-doctoral researchers working with Geoffrey on collaborative projects, he has regularly encouraged and facilitated their own research outputs. And he has shown flexibility and support when they have been offered career upgrades midway through projects. More generally, whether formally or informally, he has worked hard to support, fund, and lobby on behalf of early-career scholars near and far in search of post-docs and permanent positions. Despite this success and the practical benefit that so many have derived therefrom, he has

often admitted—a fact verified by Colette—to losing sleep over his inability to do more.

Geoffrey has also been a model colleague. Again, despite feeling comfortable in his own company, Geoffrey has worked to cultivate friendly relationships with scholars the world over and has been accessible to colleagues and students at all levels.

## 4.0. Structure of the Festschrift

In line with Geoffrey's commitment to the maximally accessible dissemination of research, this Festschrift has been published in both open-access digital editions and affordable printed formats. Due to the number of contributions, their length, and the variety in their subject matter, they are divided into two volumes, with each volume further subdivided into two sections. The volumes and sections are topical and broadly chronological. Volume 1, section A, is dedicated to contributions on Hebrew, ranging from biblical to modern. Volume 1, section B, contains articles on comparative Semitic philology and linguistics and on the Semitic languages more broadly. Volume 2, section A, is devoted to contributions dealing with the medieval and late pre-modern periods, including the Cairo Geniza, grammatical traditions, and Judaeo-Arabic. Volume 2, section B, is reserved for studies on Neo-Aramaic. A few contributions did not lend themselves to straightforward classification according to this scheme. The editors beg contributor and reader indulgence.

Contributors were given a 6000-word limit. Adherence was predictably erratic. Some contributors endeavoured from the start to follow the guidelines; others willingly shortened their

pieces upon request; for still others, various factors made reduction impossible and/or undesirable; and there were even some who felt the need to lengthen their articles during the editorial process! The editors erred on the side of leniency. While this may be controversial, it is fitting in a collection of studies dedicated to Geoffrey, who in his capacity as General Editor of the *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Literature* (*EHLL*) (Brill, 2013), was also obliged to deal with entries exceeding word limits. This, along with other idiosyncratic authorial demands, he consistently handled with consummate editorial largesse. Indeed, it is a little-known irony that *EHLL*'s entry on 'Shewa', written by Geoffrey himself, far overshot the meagre word limit allotted to it by the editors: much ado about nothing indeed!

## 5.0. Humorous Anecdotes about 'the Great Khan'

It is not all rigorous study when it comes to Geoffrey. He has also fostered an atmosphere of light-hearted collegiality. A past cohort of Geoffrey's PhD students affectionately referred to him among themselves as 'the Great Khan'. Indeed, an endearing quality of Geoffrey's is the willingness to laugh at himself, especially at stories told about him. Festschrift co-editor Ben Outhwaite, current Director of Cambridge University Library's Genizah Research Unit, was in the second year of his BA at Cambridge in (what was then called) the Faculty of Oriental Studies (today's Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies) when Geoffrey was appointed Lecturer. Ben recounts a few anecdotes.

## 5.1. Misled by the Fathers

I was one year into a Hebrew degree, having learned Biblical Hebrew from the Revd Prof. John Emerton, the Revd John Snaith and, fortunately, Meira Polliack, when Geoffrey turned up as the new guy in the Faculty of Oriental Studies. He taught me Samuel (I think…) and, definitely, Targum of Samuel.

The first class was just me and him (there were as few students then as now), and he began with "So you've got a year of Hebrew." "Yes," I said (proudly, as I was top of the class…), "And so you know that *qamets* is a long vowel and *pataḥ* a short vowel." "Yes <inward yawn>, I know all that" (I was very hard working back then). "Well, it's all rubbish. If you look at the manuscripts of the Geniza—grammatical texts and transcriptions—you'll see exactly how the Tiberian vowels were pronounced."

Silence, as Ben is stunned and blown away. Who is this prodigy? Have I been misled by the Reverend fathers? (I had my suspicions…)

## 5.2. Exam Prep

Some months later (maybe a year), and we're doing Aramaic (biblical) and Targum. Every time I come to the lecture, Geoffrey is just printing his notes off, having moments ago finished them. Seeing a teacher in Hebrew at the Faculty with a computer then (or in the faculty after lunch AND awake) was a rarity for a start. He launches into BA, and pretty soon he is sketching out a Neo-Aramaic verbal paradigm on the white board and introducing me to the geography of northern Iraq. Similarly when we get to Targum. I reckon I could talk to the Assyrians at this point. By the end of term, we are still around Samuel ch. 2, and we have to get to 11. Knowing I live in Cambridge, he suggests we meet

> in the first week of the holiday and we'll have a couple of mammoth sessions to do the remaining nine chapters. I still have my notes from this time. First page: neat notes on the emphatic, rare vocab, etc. Skip forward a few pages, and about 3 hours later, my notes consist of one long squiggle the full length of the page as I've lost the ability to write. When we hit chapter 9, verse something, on our second session, Geoffrey abruptly stops. That's enough for the exam, he declares. I then knew to revise the last few verses we'd covered with particular care.

### 5.3. A Hazard behind the Wheel

> Or the time we were driving back from a board meeting in the Rylands (GK was driving), and I made the mistake of asking him on the motorway about the nature of *tsere*. He got so engrossed in the discussion that it was a few minutes before the beeping of all the cars behind and around us made him realise he was tootling along the middle lane at 15mph!

## 6.0. Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank the Festschrift's co-editors, Magdalen, Nadia, Janet, Eleanor, and Ben, for serving as area editors, and Magdalen, especially, for her initiative in proposing the project all the way back in 2021 and, in addition to her area editor duties, undertaking the bulk of the logistics and communications by filling the central role of project secretary, all during an especially trying time. Particular thanks also to the series editors and to Rupert Gatti, Alessandra Tosi, and the publishing team at OBP, who were happy not only to publish the Festschrift as part of the *Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures* series, but also to keep

it a secret from the series's General Editor. Anne Burberry helped with consistency checking and performed the indexing. Paul Moore helpfully reviewed several contributions on short notice. I am grateful to my Hebrew Division colleagues in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Yaron Peleg, Ben Kantor, and Michael Rand (z"l), as well as to the Faculty's Finance Officer, Yuni, for their flexibility and creativity in the (totally above-board) routing of monies to fund the project out of Geoffrey's sight. I wish also to thank Wiktor Gębski, who took up the role of event planner for the Faculty Reception and Trinity College Dinner. Gratitude is also due to the contributors, who were willing both to adhere (mostly) to formatting guidelines and to wait patiently (mostly) the four years it has taken to prepare the publication—all the while communicating pleasantly and respectfully with the editors. Most also furnished peer reviews, some multiple. Many thanks, also, to Colette Khan, for her support and fact checking, and to her and to Geoffrey's family, for ensuring Geoffrey stay in town for the presentation of this Festschrift. Thank you, also, to the editors' and contributors' partners and families, for whom their loved one's participation no doubt involved some sacrifice.

And, of course, this Festschrift would not exist were it not for the inspiring demeanour and accomplishments of its honouree, whose intellect, wisdom, hard work, and care have enriched so many of our lives.

## 7.0. Concluding Dedication

As Geoffrey's 42-year-long period of paid academic employment in Cambridge comes to an end, one can only speculate as to the nature of his future unpaid activities. Doubtless more time with grandchildren and less time in administrative duties. It bears mentioning that Geoffrey need not have retired this year. University policy changed to allow up to two more years. But Geoffrey has been keen both to make way for others to move up and to divest himself of paperwork and meetings.

But how much else will change? The last few years have seen Geoffrey stop taking on students and forgo applying for the research grants he was so adept at capturing. His students have wrapped up their studies and he and his research teams are working hard to finish their projects. While this is gradually resulting in the creation of a Geoffrey-shaped gap, it is comforting to think that he will still be active and available, hopefully for many years to come. Indeed, as prolific a scholar as Geoffrey has been while burdened with formal academic and administrative responsibilities, one wonders if he might be even more fruitful in retirement.

Whatever the future holds, it is with great admiration and appreciation that we dedicate this Festschrift to Geoffrey Khan, wishing him continued involvement in the scholarly and non-scholarly pursuits he so loves and for which he is so loved. Geoffrey, you will be missed, but, I think, also oft invited back. So please don't spend too much of your free time off doing fieldwork, language survey, or cooking classes!

Aaron D. Hornkohl,
on behalf of the Editors,
Girton, February 2025

# VOLUME I:
# HEBREW, COMPARATIVE SEMITICS, AND THE SEMITIC LANGUAGES

Carpet page of the Leningrad Codex (Firkovich B19a, fol. 474a); photographer: unknown; public domain

# A. HEBREW

# GEOFFREY KHAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF BIBLICAL HEBREW CONSECUTIVE *WEQAṬAL*

*Bo Isaksson*

The *weqaṭal* clause-type plays a major role in the system of consecutive tenses (Notarius 2013, 22; Isaksson 2021, 201–4). While *wayyiqṭol* in the most recent research stands out as a relatively transparent clause-type in comparative Semitic perspective,[1] *weqaṭal* and its alternation with the imperfective/future long *yiqṭol* is commonly regarded as inexplicable. How is it that *weqaṭal* is not a past tense/perfective formation like *qaṭal*, but instead expresses future and habitual meanings?[2]

[1] See, e.g., Geoffrey Khan's recent research (2021a, 319–40). The jussive *wa-yiqṭol* and past perfective *wa-yiqṭol*, both with short *yiqṭol*, are homonymous clause-types (Khan 2020, I:534). They are inherited from Proto-Semitic (Baranowski 2016b; Huehnergard and Pat-El 2019, 7, 9; Hornkohl 2019, 556; Isaksson 2021, 209).

[2] Khan has shown that *shewa* was pronounced [a], and that the gemination behind *dagesh forte* in *wayyiqṭol* is a Second Temple innovation in the reading tradition. Accordingly, I henceforth term the consecutive tenses *wa-qaṭal* and *wa(y)-yiqṭol*, respectively (see Khan 2020, I:534; Isaksson 2021, 213 fn. 32). I will avoid calling *wa-qaṭal* and *wa(y)-yiqṭol*

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This is a question that Khan endeavours to answer in a recent article (Khan 2021a). In the present article I will critically evaluate Khan's study on the origin of Biblical Hebrew (BH) *wa-qaṭal*. Does Khan's study solve the enigma of *wa-qaṭal* or not?

Khan's argumentation has two foundation stones:

(1) Typological parallels of *wa-qaṭal* in Northeastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA) dialects, especially a form with an origin as active participle: *bət-qaṭəl*.
(2) The theory of constructions by Joan Bybee (2010; 2015)

I start with Khan's parallels of *wa-qaṭal* in NENA (§1.0), then I proceed with Khan's application of Bybee's construction theory to *wa-qaṭal* (§2.0). Finally, I summarise the scholarly outcome of Khan's article concerning *wa-qaṭal* (§3.1), express some of my hesitancies (§3.2), and make some suggestions for future research (§3.3).

## 1.0. Khan's Typological Parallels in Northeastern Neo-Aramaic

A central concept for Khan is 'discourse dependency'. It is mainly defined by examples from NENA, discussed in another recent article (Khan 2021b). In his view, the NENA 'subjunctive' *bət-qaṭəl* is a typological parallel to both the narrative *wa(y)-yiqṭol* and future/habitual *wa-qaṭal*. Their semantic relation to the preceding clause is one of 'discourse dependency'. *Bət-qaṭəl* is derived from

'tenses'; they are clause-types. I will also avoid calling them 'consecutive', since a more appropriate concept is 'discourse continuity' (connected with the clausal pattern *wa*-VERB, Isaksson 2021, 217ff.).

an earlier active participle *qaṭəl*. It is occasionally used in narrative, and then often describes customs or habitual actions. An example is:

(1) Neo-Aramaic (Barwar dialect B16:18): *bət-qaṭəl* encodes a custom with past reference

*qam-ṣàwma*| *ʾíθ* *xošébə* *bnàθa.*|
before-fast there.is Sunday.of girls

*bnáθa* *kúlla* *p̂ṯ-azí-wa* *bɛ̀θa,*|
girls all FUT-go.SBJV.3PL-PST home

*b-šaqlí-wa* *ʾixála* *mən-dáwwa* *dáwwa*
FUT-take.SBJV.3PL-PST food from-this.OBL this.OBL

*dáwwa,*| *ṯ-azí-wa* *gu-xa-ṭùra,*|
this.OBL FUT-go.SBJV.3PL-PST in-a-mountain

*ṯ-atwì-wa,*| *ṯ-axlì-wa,*| *b-šatì-wa.*|
FUT-come.SBJV-3PL-PST FUT-eat.SBJV.3PL-PST FUT-drink.SBJV-PST

'Before the fast (of Lent) was Girls' Sunday. All the girls went home, took food from here and from there, then went to the mountains, they sat, ate and drank.' (Khan 2021b, 152)

But *bət-qaṭəl* can also be used as a future form, as is shown in (2).

(2) Neo-Aramaic (Barwar dialect A1:17): *bət-qaṭəl* as predictive future

*b-nayəs-li*| *ṯ-axə̀l-li.*|
FUT-bite.SBJV.3MS-1MS FUT-eat.SBJV.3MS-1MS

'He will bite me. He will eat me.' (Khan 2021b, 148)

An interesting feature of *bət-qaṭəl* is its use in subordinate clauses, as is shown in (3).

(3) Neo-Aramaic (Barwar dialect A15:5): *bət-qaṭəl* as subjunctive in narration

*ṣəlyɛ = le*| *ta-t-ʾázəl* *ʾùrxa.*|

go.PTCP = COP.3MS to-COMP-go.SBJV.3MS road

'He went down in order to set off on the road.' (Khan 2021b, 177)

*Bət-qaṭəl* is also sporadically used in events that are dependent on what precedes. Specifically, *bət-qaṭəl* may express an apodosis in NENA, as in (4).

(4) Neo-Aramaic (Barwar dialect A23:5): *bət-qaṭəl* as apodosis

*ʾən-kpìn-ni,*| *ṯ-axlàn-ne.*|

if-hunger.PFV-1S FUT-eat.SBJV.1MS-3MS

'If I am hungry, I shall eat it.' (Khan 2021b, 149)

The various functions of *bət-qaṭəl*—customary action, habituality, predictive future—inspire Khan to a comparison with the BH *wa-qaṭal*. Khan suggests that, since *wa-qatal* is attested as an apodosis in the most ancient Northwest Semitic texts (Amarna Canaanite, Ugaritic), it is reasonable also to regard *wa-qaṭal* as a clause-type with an origin as apodosis, and to hold that *wa-qaṭal* developed future and habitual meanings from its original apodosis functions. In those ancient apodoses, *wa-qatal* could have future time reference (Smith 1991, 6–15; Sivan 1998, 92; 2001, 221; Tropper 2012, 716ff.; Renz 2016, 442; Baranowski 2016a, 173–78). Example (5) shows a *wa-qatal* apodosis in Ugaritic.

(5) *w hm ḫt ʿl w lʾikt ʿmk*

'and if the Hittite has attacked, then I will send [*wa-laʾiktū̆*] (a letter) to you.…' (*KTU* 2.30, 17–18; quoted from Sivan 1998, 92)

It seems that in the early stages of Northwest Semitic the initial *wa-* before a futural *qatal* was optional in the function of apodosis. In Amarna Canaanite there are many examples of *Ø-qatal* with future time reference, as in (6) (Baranowski 2016a, 173–78).

(6) [22]*ù šum-ma ia-a-nu ERÍN.MEŠ pi-ṭa-tu$_4$* [23]*pa-ṭa-ra-at KUR LUGAL-ri a-na LÚ-MEŠ* [24]\ *ḫa-pí-ri*
'If there are no archers, the land of the king will desert to the 'Apiru.' (EA 290:22–24; Baranowski 2016a, 174, his emphasis)

Since the NENA *bət-qaṭəl* is a subjunctive according to Khan, he suggests that *wa-qaṭal* is also a subjunctive, originally used in close dependence on a protasis in a conditional relationship.[3]

In order to understand the development of the BH *wa-qaṭal* from its original function as apodosis, Khan applies Bybee's construction theory to *wa-qaṭal*.

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[3] I am not fully convinced that the linguistic literature to which Khan refers confirms his concept 'discourse dependency', even if taken as an entirely semantic, not syntactic, notion (Khan 2021a, 341). Khan's main reference is Cristofaro (2003), but, as far as I can see, Cristofaro does not support the idea that a *wa-qaṭal* apodosis has an historical origin "in subordinate constructions" (Khan 2021a, 340). Cristofaro's central concept seems to be 'assertiveness' (2003, 32): which clause in a conditional linking is asserted? The answer should be the apodosis. Cristofaro's definition of subordination seems to suggest that an apodosis *wa-qaṭal* is not a subordinate clause.

## 2.0. Khan's Application of Bybee's Construction Theory

With Bybee's construction theory as theoretical foundation, Khan sets out to reconstruct how the original *wa-qatal* in apodosis position could develop into a general clause for future and habitual action in BH.

Khan's answer is that *wa-qaṭal* is a 'construction' in Bybee's sense. The original apodosis *wa-qaṭal* was 'schematised' by step-by-step extensions of its meanings. This terminology deserves brief elaboration.

Bybee begins by defining 'chunking': "When two or more words are often used together, they also develop a sequential relation" (Bybee 2010, 25, 33). 'Constructions' are sequential chunks "that sometimes have special meanings and other properties" (Bybee 2010, 36). High frequency is determinative. The more a sequence of morphemes or words is used together, the stronger the sequence will be perceived as a unit and the less associated with its component parts. This process leads to increasing autonomy of the construction (Bybee 2010, 36, 48).

Example: the English phrase *be going to* is a chunk, which, because of its frequency, was extended in usage and developed into a general future morpheme *gonna*.

*Be going to* is a construction, with many extensional steps that widen its applicability. It is a construction, since the futural/intentional meaning cannot be deduced from the parts of the construction, *be*+*going*+*to*. The original construction was SUBJECT + BE + *going to* + VERB, where the capitalised items are

schematic. This construction is still in living usage (Bybee 2010, 96; 2015, 124).

*Gonna* is a grammatical morpheme, which has undergone grammaticalisation from the construction *be going to*. It is a future auxiliary. In the case of *gonna*, a construction has acquired grammatical meaning and a phonetically reduced form (Bybee 2010, 106; 2015, 268). At the same time *be going to* also persists as a construction with its analysable elements and futural meaning.

Khan's idea is that BH *wa-qaṭal* was a chunk with high frequency that became a construction. "Constructions often contain explicit lexical material," such as the conjunction *wa-* in *wa-qaṭal*, and "have a special form, meaning and pragmatic effect that cannot be captured by more general principles of grammar" (Bybee 2010, 76ff.). Since *wa-qaṭal* is a construction, the meanings of *wa-qaṭal* cannot be deduced from the separate elements *wa* + *qaṭal*. A grammatical analysis of *wa-* and *qaṭal* separately does not help. This is one of the reasons BH scholarship has found *wa-qaṭal* enigmatic. In the construction, *wa-* is the invariant part and *qaṭal* is schematic with multiple forms: *wa-QAṬAL*.[4]

This is a significant theoretical advancement and an excellent application of modern linguistic theory to an enigma in BH.[5]

An established construction *wa-qaṭal* with future and habitual meanings does not seem to be attested in Archaic Hebrew

[4] Khan nowhere says this explicitly, as far as I can see, but it is an inevitable conclusion.

[5] A forerunner to this idea is found in Smith (1991, 8): "It would appear that the future uses of **qātal* in BH conditional sentences were extended to **qātal* in independent clauses in the form of the 'converted perfect'."

poetry (Notarius 2013, 288ff., 304). This is an important methodological observation. *Wa-qaṭal* as a construction outside the apodosis domain must have developed in a diachronic stage close to, or within, Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH).6 If we seek examples of the successive extensions of the *wa-qaṭal* construction, we should preferably search for traces of the steps within CBH texts. The construction *wa-qaṭal* is primarily a Classical Hebrew innovation.[7]

The idea of *wa-qaṭal* as a construction in Bybee's sense necessarily leads to a new understanding of the historical origin of *wa-qaṭal* as a clause-type. *Wa-qaṭal* is not a 'tense'. Though a construction, it is still a clause, and this clause has a normal connective *wa-* (cf. Isaksson 2021, 218ff.). The retained connective *wa-* is probably the reason why *wa-qaṭal* did not become a verbal morpheme (Khan 2021a, 342). There is no phonetic reduction in *wa-qaṭal*, as there is, for example, in the case of *gonna*.

The construction *wa-qaṭal* was generalised in several steps. Khan outlines some of the possible extensions. As many scholars have assumed, the starting point was a conditional relationship.

(7) אִם־אֶמְצָא בִסְדֹם חֲמִשִּׁים צַדִּיקִם בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר וְנָשָׂאתִי לְכָל־הַמָּקוֹם בַּעֲבוּרָם׃
'If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sake.' (Gen. 18.26)[8]

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[6] For the concept of *domain*, see Cohen (2014).

[7] For corresponding uses of *wa-qaṭal* in pre-exilic Hebrew inscriptions, see Gogel (1998, 77ff.); Schüle (2000, 137–39); Renz (2016).

[8] Cf. Khan (2021a, 308). I have replaced Khan's example with another from my corpus.

Example (7) illustrates the proposed origin of *wa-qaṭal* as a construction. This type of linking with *wa-qaṭal* as apodosis has typological parallels in early Northwest Semitic. There is a contingency in the semantics of the linking: in a logical sense, *wa-qaṭal* 'depends' on the truth-value of the protasis. For Khan this is an important observation and a reason for application of the concept 'discourse dependency' to *wa-qaṭal*.

The contingency fades away when we consider the first logical extension of the *wa-qaṭal* construction (Khan 2021a, 312): a *wa-qaṭal* is allowed to follow not only a protasis, but also a temporal clause, as in (8).

(8) וְהָיָה כִּי־יִרְאוּ אֹתְךָ הַמִּצְרִים וְאָמְרוּ אִשְׁתּוֹ זֹאת וְהָרְגוּ אֹתִי וְאֹתָךְ יְחַיּוּ׃
'When the Egyptians see you, they will say "This is his wife," and they will kill me and let you live.' (Gen. 12.12; Khan 2021a, 309)

The generalisation exemplified in (8) is a case of *schematisation*: the functional range of *wa-qaṭal* is extended to follow a temporal clause. In a temporal clause, events are not just contingent, as they are in a conditional apodosis, but are presupposed to take place (Khan 2021a, 311).

The schematisation takes a step further when the preceding clause is not subordinated, but constitutes a main clause, as in (9).

(9) וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדַּר תַּצְמִיחַ לָךְ וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה׃
'It will yield you brambles and thistles, and you will eat the produce of the land.' (Gen. 3.18)[9]

[9] I prefer this clear example to the one given by Khan (2021a, 309), namely 1 Sam. 17.32.

In (9) the *wa-qaṭal* clause has future time reference, as in (7) and (8), but it is now coordinated with a long *yiqṭol(u)* main clause.

Khan designates the relation between the two clauses as one of semantic 'dependence' (Khan 2021a, 341), but I would suggest that it is more accurate to speak of semantic coordination. None of the clauses is semantically subordinate to the other. The clauses are of 'equal status', using terms taken from Halliday (2004, 374, 489), and both are 'assertive' in Cristofaro's (2003, 33ff.) terminology.

Already at this stage of extension of the functional range of *wa-qaṭal* we observe alternation between the long *yiqṭol(u)* and the *wa-qaṭal* construction, which is one of the fundamental features of the system of consecutive tenses.[10]

The next step outlined by Khan is that *wa-qaṭal* is cognitively—but not temporally—bound to the preceding clause, which may express no more than a state of affairs, as in (10).

(10) רַ֚ק אֵ֣ין־יִרְאַ֣ת אֱלֹהִ֔ים בַּמָּק֖וֹם הַזֶּ֑ה וְהָרָג֥וּנִי עַל־דְּבַ֖ר אִשְׁתִּֽי׃
'But there is no fear of God in this place and they will kill me because of my wife.' (Gen. 20.11; Khan 2021a, 309, 312)

The first clause in (10) is verbless and refers to the general situation of the speaker. Khan remarks that the linking is analogous to a topic-comment relationship, which is similar to conditional

[10] This is not something Khan discusses, but, as will be argued further on in this article, the connection between *yiqṭol(u)* and *wa-qaṭal* is fundamental from the start of the construction's development.

linking.[11] The verbless clause can also be interpreted as a state that constitutes the reason for the action in the *wa-qaṭal* clause: 'therefore they will kill me'. The fundamental point here is the steps of schematisation taken from the original conditional linking to one where the preceding verbless clause may describe a topic or give a reason for *wa-qaṭal*. The construction *wa-qaṭal* has been extended to relate to a state of affairs that serves as the reason for Abraham's prediction.

A further step in the process of schematisation might be when *wa-qaṭal* can follow left-dislocation, which Khan analyses as a topic after which *wa-qaṭal* follows as comment, as in (11).

(11) וְהַנִּשְׁאָרִים בָּכֶם וְהֵבֵאתִי מׇרֵךְ בִּלְבָבָם בְּאַרְצׇת אוֹיְבֵיהֶם
'As for those of you who may be left—I will bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies…' (Lev. 26.36; Khan 2021a, 309, 312)

Topics may be full clauses, but in (11) the topic is just a noun phrase, as is the case also with left-dislocation, and *wa-qaṭal* follows as comment with anaphoric pronominal suffixes. It is reasonable to state, as Khan does, that *wa-qaṭal* in this case expresses posteriority, since the left-dislocation with its *nifʿal* participle, implies the existence of the people at speech time, and that after that time God will execute his plan on them.

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[11] A *topic* "represents an entity the existence of which is agreed upon by the speaker and his audience. As such, it constitutes the framework which has been selected for the following discourse" (Haiman 1978, 585).

A further step in schematisation is encountered when *wa-qaṭal* partakes in a complex background description with past habitual action, as in (12).

(12) וְאֵד יַעֲלֶה מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־כָּל־פְּנֵי־הָאֲדָמָה׃
'A mist used to go up from the earth and would water the whole face of the ground.' (Gen. 2.6; Khan 2021a, 309, 312ff.)

The first clause, with a long *yiqṭol(u)* (יַעֲלֶה), establishes a past habitual action which disrupts the historical main line in the creation story and introduces background description. This is a perfectly normal usage of an imperfective gram with past time reference. The extension of *wa-qaṭal* concerns the semantics: that the *wa-qaṭal* construction is able to describe a past habitual action. In the earlier steps of schematisation *wa-qaṭal* has expressed a future meaning; now it expresses another typical meaning of an imperfective gram, habitual past.

Khan explains the habituality of *wa-qaṭal* as a schematisation of the *conditional* linking. As an argument he refers to his typological parallel *bət-qaṭəl* in NENA, which can be used for habitual action (Khan 2021a, 312ff.). On this point it must be remarked that habitual action is practically non-existent in CBH conditional linkings, occurring neither in protases nor apodoses.[12] I will return to the issue later in this article.

[12] There is a general present habitual meaning in the apodosis of Num. 12.6, encoded with a long *yiqṭol(u)*. See further Table 2 below.

A further step in schematisation might be the encoding of past habitual actions in a series of sequential *wa-qaṭal* clauses, as in (13).

(13) כִּי מִן־הַבְּאֵר הַהִוא יַשְׁקוּ הָעֲדָרִים וְהָאֶבֶן גְּדֹלָה עַל־פִּי הַבְּאֵר: וְנֶאֶסְפוּ־שָׁמָּה כָּל־הָעֲדָרִים וְגָלֲלוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל ׀ פִּי הַבְּאֵר וְהִשְׁקוּ אֶת־הַצֹּאן וְהֵשִׁיבוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן עַל־פִּי הַבְּאֵר לִמְקֹמָהּ:

'…because the flocks used to be watered from that well—the stone over the mouth of the well was large—[3]and all the flocks would gather there, and they would roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and they would water the sheep, and they put back the stone in its place on the mouth of the well.' (Gen. 29.2–3; Khan 2021a, 309ff., 312ff.)

In (13) a *yiqṭol(u)* (יַשְׁקוּ) clause initiates a background description that is continued by four sequential habitual *wa-qaṭal* clauses.[13] Khan (2021a, 314) does not mention that the series of habitual *wa-qaṭal* clauses in (13) comes after an initial *yiqṭol(u)* with past habitual meaning. He instead explains *wa-qaṭal*'s habituality as due to its semantic similarity to the 'dependence' of an apodosis.

A further step of schematisation is illustrated in (14), where *wa-qaṭal* clauses continue an active participle clause.

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[13] The habituality of *wa-qaṭal* in (12) and (13) is semantically distant from the meanings normally found in an apodosis. The conclusion must be that the schematisation of *wa-qaṭal* has taken many extensional steps when it is used for habitual background.

(14) שְׂרָפִים עֹמְדִים| מִמַּעַל לוֹ שֵׁשׁ כְּנָפַיִם שֵׁשׁ כְּנָפַיִם לְאֶחָד בִּשְׁתַּיִם| יְכַסֶּה פָּנָיו וּבִשְׁתַּיִם יְכַסֶּה רַגְלָיו וּבִשְׁתַּיִם יְעוֹפֵף: וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל־זֶה וְאָמַר קָדוֹשׁ | קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מְלֹא כָל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ:

‘Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one would call out to another and would say “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory.”’ (Isa. 6.2–3; Khan 2021a, 310, 312ff.)

Like the prophetic dreams in the Joseph story, the prophetic vision in (14) begins with an active participle clause.[14] The Seraphim were standing (שְׂרָפִים עֹמְדִים), and this standing is elaborated with a number of accompanying actions: covering face and feet, flying, calling out, and saying. The actions that accompany the standing are coded with three *yiqṭol(u)* (יְכַסֶּה, יְכַסֶּה, יְעוֹפֵף) followed by two *wa-qaṭal* clauses (וְקָרָא, וְאָמַר). After the past continuous participle both *yiqṭol(u)* and *wa-qaṭal* express past continuity or past habituality. According to Khan, the dependence of the original apodosis in this case has been schematised to a cognitive topical reference point. In my view, it should be enough to observe that the repetitive actions are initiated by a participle and continued with *yiqṭol(u)* and *wa-qaṭal* clauses. When an initial focused constituent (בִּשְׁתַּיִם) is needed, a *yiqṭol(u)* is used; when there is no initial constituent, *wa-qaṭal* clauses are used instead.

A further step of schematisation is shown in (15), where an independent *wa-qaṭal* clause expresses a past habitual action.

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[14] Gen. 40.17; 41.2, 5, 17–19, 22; cf. also Gen. 28.12f.; Judg. 7.13.

(15) וְעָלָה֩ הָאִ֨ישׁ הַה֜וּא מֵעִירוֹ֙ מִיָּמִ֣ים ׀ יָמִ֗ימָה לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֺת֙ וְלִזְבֹּ֣חַ לַיהוָ֔ה צְבָאוֹת֙ בְּשִׁלֹ֔ה

'And this man used to go up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of Hosts in Shiloh.' (1 Sam. 1.3; Khan 2021a, 313ff.)

Khan does not comment on the unusual character of this background clause. In example (15), a *wa-qaṭal* construction—a continuity clause—disrupts the storyline and starts a background section with habitual action: *wa(y)-yiqṭol* + *wa-qaṭal*.[15] A more common strategy when starting a habitual background complex is to begin with a discourse discontinuity *yiqṭol(u)* clause (type *X-yiqṭol(u)*, Isaksson 2021, 217ff.), as in (12) and (13), or a *qōṭēl* clause, and continue with *wa-qaṭal* clauses.[16]

## 3.0. Evaluation of Khan's Contribution to the Problem of *wa-qaṭal*

### 3.1. Summary of Achievements

- Khan's application of Bybee's construction theory to the *wa-qaṭal* clause-type is completely new. Since *wa-qaṭal* is a construction that has not developed into a verbal morpheme, it is not a 'tense', but a clause-type. The meanings of *wa-qaṭal* are not a function of its component parts, *wa* + *qaṭal*.

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[15] The storyline *wa(y)-yiqṭol* before *wa-qatal* is represented by a bi-clausal (thetic) cleft construction in 1 Sam. 1.2, introduced by *wayhī*, which should probably be analysed as mono-clausal syntax with an initial focus marker *wayhī* (Khan 2019, 15–18).

[16] For *wa-haya* introducing background, see Isaksson (1998).

- The development of *wa-qaṭal* into a full-blown future and habitual construction took place in several steps, which Bybee calls *schematisations* or *extensions* (of usage and meaning).
- The birth of the *wa-qaṭal* construction took place in the context of linking between two clauses: PROTASIS + *wa-QAṬAL*, where the capitalised parts are subject to extension. The *wa-* in the construction is invariable.
- The process that resulted in the *wa-qaṭal* construction with future and habitual meanings was an internal Classical Hebrew, or at least post-Archaic, development. It is not attested in Archaic Hebrew poetry (Notarius 2013).
- *Wa-qaṭal* did not develop into a grammatical morpheme, probably because of the initial connective *wa-*, which in all uses has retained its force as a conjunction. As a matter of fact, *wa-qaṭal* is phonetically unreduced.

## 3.2. Hesitancies

### 3.2.1. The Missed Interaction Between *wa-qaṭal* and *yiqṭol(u)*

Khan does not fully acknowledge the close interaction between *wa-qaṭal* and long *yiqṭol(u)* in the process. The long *yiqṭol(u)* is an old imperfective formation (Huehnergard and Pat-El 2019, 9), and it is a common phenomenon in the world's languages for habitual meanings to be expressed via imperfective gram (Carlson 2012).[17]

[17] Khan (2021a, 313) writes that a "habitual predicate is imperfective in aspect."

Since the development of *wa-qaṭal* as a construction is internal, statistics from CBH are relevant.[18] If we search for examples of the successive extensions of the *wa-qaṭal* construction, we should expect to find traces of such steps in the CBH texts. CBH texts exhibit a great number of conditional linkings. If we scrutinise them, it becomes clear that *yiqṭol(u)* clauses dominate in protases, and are also very frequent in apodoses:

Table 1: Statistics of *yiqṭol(u)* and *wa-qaṭal* in protases and apodoses

| | **Protases** | **Apodoses** |
|---|---|---|
| *yiqṭol(u)* | 61% | 27% |
| *wa-qaṭal* | 2.5% | 48% |
| **Total in corpus** | **478** | **463** |

The dominant predicate in protases is *yiqṭol(u)*, with 61 percent. This means that when an apodosis *wa-qaṭal* began to develop as a construction, protases with a *yiqṭol(u)* predicate had high frequency. From the beginning, the *wa-qaṭal* construction was most frequently associated with *yiqṭol(u)*.

In apodoses, half of the cases start with *wa-qaṭal*. It is significant that 27 percent have a *yiqṭol(u)* predicate. Since the phenomenon '*waw* of apodosis' can be feasible only in the construction *wa-qaṭal*, the term is unwarranted. The *wa-* in *wa-qaṭal* is a

[18] All statistics are from my corpus, consisting of the Pentateuch and the book of Judges, see Isaksson (2021, 207). The archaic sections are excluded. In the following I take for granted that statistics from this corpus are also generally relevant for CBH (cf. Joosten 2016, 329), though I am aware that the large sections of legal material in the Pentateuch might make the statistics less than fully representative of the living usage of the classical language.

normal invariable conjunction *wa-* 'and' (*pace* Khan 2021a, 315). In other types of apodoses, not least those with a *yiqṭol(u)* predicate, the rule is asyndesis.[19]

Since asyndesis is otherwise the rule in a CBH apodosis, the question must be raised as to why *wa-qaṭal*, and not, for example, *Ø-qatal*, increased in apodosis frequency and became a construction.[20] In Amarna Canaanite, a futural apodosis with *qatal* could be preceded by *wa-* or be asyndetic, though the *wa-qatal* clause-type was more frequent (Baranowski 2016a, 173–78). In Ugaritic, a futural *qatal(a)* in apodosis is as a rule syndetic with a proclitic *wa-* (Tropper 2012, 717). This comparative evidence suggests that a *wa-qaṭal* apodosis with future meaning had already become a chunk, though possibly not a construction, in early Northwest Semitic. There must have been a reason for this strong tendency.

This is a question Khan does not discuss (2021a, 315). To approach an answer, it is necessary to consider the ancient Canaanite usage of *wa-qatal* in modal sequences. As the second or third clause in a modal sequence, *wa-qatal* may occur with future time reference, and in such uses the *wa-* seems necessary: IMP + *wa-*

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[19] Of 242 non-*wa-qaṭal* apodoses in the corpus only five have an initial *wa-*: Gen. 13.9 (2x); Exod. 8.22; Num. 16.22, Judg. 6.13.

[20] In my CBH corpus a futural *Ø-qaṭal* apodosis is extremely rare. The only possible instance is שָׁכֻלְתִּי 'I am/will be bereaved' (Gen. 43.14), which is syntactically linked to a temporal clause with the conjunction *ka-ʾăšɛr*. The other instances of *Ø-qaṭal* apodoses express anterior (as in Exod. 22.14) or performative meanings (as in Deut. 4.26). On one occasion a *qaṭal* morpheme in an apodosis expresses future meaning in an archaic oath formula: כִּי אִם־נִקַּמְתִּי בָכֶם 'I swear that I won't stop until I get my revenge on you' (Judg. 15.7).

*qatal* + *wa-qatal*, e.g., '*Kill* your leader and then *you will be* like us and *you will be at peace*' (EA 74:23–29, similarly EA 123:33–35; Baranowski 2016a, 162); IMP + *wa-yaqtula* + *wa-qatal*, e.g., '*Send back* word to me, or *I will form* an alliance with ʿAbdi-Aširta like Yapa-Hadda and Zimrid[d]a so that *I stay alive*' (EA 93:9–13; Baranowski 2016a, 164). In a similar way, an apodosis in Amarna Canaanite may consist of the series *wa-yaqtul* + *wa-qatal* + *wa-qatal*, e.g., '*I will abandon* the city and *depart* and my life *will be safe* while I do as I please' (EA 82:41–46) or *wa-yaqtul* + *wa-qatal* (EA 73:11–14; Baranowski 2016a, 174, 176). In the case that *wa-qatal* takes part in a modal series, there seems to be no alternative: a clause within a modal sequence should by default signal discourse continuity.[21] This ancient *wa-qatal* in a modal sequence with intentional future meaning probably established *wa-qaṭal*, rather than *Ø-qaṭal*, as a chunk and a construction in apodosis function in CBH. In this way, CBH *wa-qaṭal* preserves a more archaic usage of the old resultative *qatal* than does CBH *qaṭal*, which has developed into a gram for anterior and past perfective meanings. The *wa-qaṭal* usage in modal series, where *wa-qaṭal* has a meaning of intentional future, is not a Hebrew innovation. Such a function of *qatal*, which Baranowski (2016a, 162) calls "modal *qatal*" and which occurs only in the *wa-qatal* clause-type, has influenced the frequency of *wa-qatal* as apodosis with future time reference, both in Amarna and in CBH.

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[21] On the iconic discourse continuity of *wa*-VERB constructions see Hornkohl (2019, 555). For *wa-qaṭal* in CBH modal sequences, see Dallaire (2014, §2.5.2), and later in this article.

### 3.2.2. A Missed Meaning in CBH Apodoses

Khan does not note that obligation is by far the most frequent meaning in CBH apodoses. This is a meaning that is found also in the imperfective *yaqtulu* in Amarna Canaanite. Baranowski regards it "a pragmatic use of its future meaning" (2016a, 150).

Table 2. Meanings in *yiqṭol(u)* and *wa-qaṭal* apodoses in the corpus[22]

| | ***yiqṭol(u)* in apodosis** | ***wa-qaṭal* as apodosis** |
|---|---|---|
| Obligation | 78% | 67% |
| Future | 16% | 31% |
| Permission | 4% | 1.5% |
| Habitual present | 1% | — |
| Ability | 1% | 0.5% |
| Counterfactual | — | 0.5%[23] |
| **Total number** | **123** | **221** |

If we want to discuss the development of *wa-qaṭal* on the basis of its use in apodoses, the obligational meaning must be recognised. As can be seen in Table 2, modal obligation is by far the most frequent meaning of an apodosis in CBH.

Also in this case (obligation), it is necessary to recognise the influence of the long *yiqṭol(u)*. The table indicates that there seems to be a strong semantic correlation between *wa-qaṭal* as apodosis and *yiqṭol(u)* as apodosis. The internal Hebrew construction *wa-qaṭal* was from the beginning semantically conditioned by the imperfective meanings of *yiqṭol(u)*.

[22] Temporal linkings are not included, since the temporal clause expresses something expected, not a condition. My statistics concerning conditional sentences in the corpus are fairly complete, which means that the percentage numbers are significant.

[23] Judg. 16.17. Brockelmann (1908–13, II, §432): "Irreal gedachte Bedingungen."

Table 2 also shows that habitual meanings are extremely rare in a conditional linking. Habituality is never expressed by a *wa-qaṭal* apodosis in the corpus. Khan's argument that a *wa-qaṭal* in 'dependence' position (as apodosis) easily extends to habitual meaning is not plausible in the light of Table 2. Habitual meanings are not easily acquired at all in conditional linkings.

The habitual meanings of *wa-qaṭal* are found outside the realm of conditional constructions in CBH, and in nearly all examples of (past) habitual *wa-qaṭal* there is a preceding habitual *yiqṭol(u)* clause. This shows that early in the schematisation of *wa-qaṭal*, it was perceived, and used, as a simple-clause (a *wa*-VERB type) substitute for *yiqṭol(u)* in the absence of an initial focused element or negation (Hornkohl 2019, 555). Crosslinguistically, habituality is a normal meaning for an imperfective formation like *yiqṭol(u)*. My conclusion is that *yiqṭol(u)* has heavily influenced the meanings of the construction *wa-qaṭal* during its step-by-step development: obligation, future, habituality.[24]

[24] In spite of Khan's significant contribution to our understanding of *wa-qaṭal*, and though conscious of my lack of expertise in NENA dialects, I am not convinced that *bət-qaṭəl* in NENA is a relevant typological parallel to *wa-qaṭal*. My main arguments against this supposition are: (1) Khan regards *bət-qaṭəl* as a typological parallel to both narrative *wa(y)-yiqṭol* and future *wa-qaṭal*, which is unconvincing, because, in such a case, CBH would have had only one *wa*-VERB clause-type, and this could function in all TAM contexts; but in fact CBH had two *wa*-VERB clause-types, *wa(y)-yiqṭol* and *wa-qaṭal*, functioning in different TAM contexts; (2) *bət-qaṭəl* lacks a connective, which is attached to both *wa-qaṭal* and *wa(y)-yiqṭol*; (3) Khan regards *wa(y)-yiqṭol*, like *bət-qaṭəl*, a construction in Bybee's sense, but it is not: the meanings of *wa(y)-yiqṭol* can be de-

### 3.3. A Suggestion for Future Research

It is commonly accepted today that the West Semitic *qatal(a)* conjugation has developed from a resultative construction (Huehnergard 1987, 225, 227; Cook 2012, 203; Huehnergard and Pat-El 2019, 7, 18 fn. 6). Such constructions "predicates the **condition** or **state** that is the result of the action of the verb" (Huehnergard 2011, 221, his emphasis).

*Qaṭal*'s prototypical meaning—expressing the result of a previous action or state—made *wa-qatal* a natural choice for the expression of an apodosis. To this must be added the late Bronze age Northwest Semitic custom of using *wa-qatal* in modal sequences with final meaning of (Renz 2016, §2.1.2.3.4; 649 fn. 267).

It is probable, considering the comparative Northwest Semitic evidence, that *wa-qatal* as apodosis was a chunk already in the Late Bronze Age languages. Though we might also expect *Ø-qatal* with its prototypical resultative meaning to be used as apodosis, this asyndetic clause-type was used only occasionally as apodosis in Amarna and seemingly not at all in Ugaritic. Already in this early stage, both Ugaritic and Amarna Canaanite attest to the use of *wa-qatal* in modal sequences with prototypical result and final meanings. In such domains only *wa-qatal*, the continuity alternative (type *wa*-VERB), is attested, not *Ø-qatal*.

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duced from its component parts: *wa-* which is a normal Semitic connective, and the short 'preterite' *yiqṭol*, which is inherited from Proto-Semitic (Baranowski 2016b; Isaksson 2021; for the archaic poetry: Notarius 2013, 78, 280; Khan 2021a, 320).

The diachronic semantic development of *wa-qaṭal* in Iron Age Hebrew was one of bleaching: from a clause expressing finality, to a clause that continues a volitive (imperative or jussive) with further instructions. Also without an initial volitive, *wa-qaṭal* can continue *yiqṭol(u)*, not only in instructions (obligational meaning), but in all imperfective functions. Unfortunately, the diachronic steps in the semantic bleaching of *wa-qaṭal* are poorly attested in the meagre material of the pre-exilic Hebrew inscriptions (Renz 2016, §5.2).[25] However, the expected range of meanings of *wa-qaṭal* in modal sequences can be detected in the richer CBH textual material.

As apodosis *wa-qaṭal* was gradually extended to other types of environments, (1) with extended range of the preceding clause-type: subordinate clauses (temporal and causal) and, gradually, main clauses before *wa-qaṭal*; but also (2) with extended meanings of *wa-qaṭal* itself, from result to plain future and obligation.

Example (16) illustrates the result meaning of *wa-qaṭal* in CBH, often at the end of a modal sequence.

(16) *Ø-IMP + wa-qaṭal + wa-qaṭal*
הַקְרֵב֙ אֶת־מַטֵּ֣ה לֵוִ֔י וְהַעֲמַדְתָּ֥ אֹת֛וֹ לִפְנֵ֖י אַהֲרֹ֣ן הַכֹּהֵ֑ן וְשֵׁרְת֖וּ אֹתֽוֹ׃
'Bring the tribe of Levi and station them in the presence of Aaron the priest, so that they may serve him.' (Num. 3.6; Levine 1993, 152)

[25] Renz' note 308 does not support that *wa-qaṭal* is attested with a sense of finality in the Hebrew pre-exilic inscriptions; his example of a final meaning is often otherwise interpreted: Arad 24:14–15 (Renz 2016, 659 fn. 308, §4.2.1.2; cf. Dobbs-Allsopp et al. 2005, 49).

In (16) the first *wa-qaṭal* in the sequence is an additional instruction (obligation), while the second has final force.[26]

The later usage of *wa-qaṭal* as an additional instruction after the volitive in modal sequences is much more frequent in CBH. In such cases it carries connotations different from the initial volitive (Revell 1989, 23). The *wa-qaṭal* clause is not perceived as subordinate, but there remains in many cases a sense of intention, expressing the goal of the action in the initial volitive(s). An example is (17):

(17) *Ø-O.noun*-IMP + *wa-qaṭal* + *wa-qaṭal* + *wa-qaṭal*
כָּל־הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר־אִתְּךָ מִכָּל־בָּשָׂר בָּעוֹף וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־
הָאָרֶץ הוֹצֵא אִתָּךְ וְשָׁרְצוּ בָאָרֶץ וּפָרוּ וְרָבוּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃
'Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—they shall swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.' (Gen. 8.17)

In (17) the *wa-qaṭal* clauses follow a pausal stop and express the intended result of the command in the imperative. They cannot be analysed as additional instructions.[27]

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[26] Other examples of *wa-qaṭal* expressing finality in modal sequences: Exod. 8.12; 18.19; 19.23; Num. 4.19 (Garr 1998, lxxxiii: result from a preceding situation); 7.5; 8.7; Judg. 16.5.

[27] Other examples of *wa-qaṭal* clauses that have a nuance of intention in modal series: Gen. 1.14 (Dallaire 2014, 147, purpose); 6.21; 19.2; 30.32; 31.44; 43.14; 45.9b–10; 45.19; 47.29; 47.30; Exod. 3.16; 4.21; 8.12; 18.19, 22; 19.23 (intended result); 19.24; 30.34–35; Num. 3.6 (first *wa-qaṭal*), 41; Deut. 28.8, 22; Judg. 11.37; 16.5; 19.13 (Dallaire 2014, 147); 20.32.

Baranowski observes a relative rarity of *wa-qatal* in modal sequences in Amarna (2016a, 160). This is not the case in CBH, where *wa-qaṭal* is frequent. And while the choice of *wa-qatal* in a modal sequence in Amarna may be due to the lexically stative meaning of the verbs (Baranowski 2016a, 162), in CBH all lexical types are represented. In this respect, the frequency of *wa-qaṭal* in modal sequences and its wide semantic range represent an extension compared to ancient Canaanite, and the latest steps of the same development can be detected in the pre-exilic Hebrew inscriptions (Renz 2016, 649).

My hypothesis is that the preponderance of *wa-qatal* as against *Ø-qatal* as first clause in apodoses is due to the influence from its use in modal sequences, where *wa-* before *qatal* was preferred, because *wa-qatal* was a discourse continuity clause (type *wa*-VERB; Isaksson 2024, 395–461). The construction *wa-qaṭal* is specifically a clause-type without negation and without initial focused element, the Semitic unmarked declarative word order (Pat-El 2019, 86). If a negated clause is needed, or a constituent is to be inserted before the verb in the coding of the apodosis, another clause-type must be used in CBH. As Table 1 indicates, the substitute predicate was a *yiqṭol(u)* morpheme in CBH. When the apodosis was negated, most frequently *lō yiqṭol(u)* was used, and as soon as a focused constituent, like an object noun phrase, was inserted before the verb, *X-yiqṭol(u)* was used instead of *wa-qaṭal*. As a rule, such *yiqṭol(u)* apodoses were asyndetic. In (18) a negated apodosis is illustrated.

(18) אִם־לֹ֣א יֵרֵ֤ד אֲחִיכֶם֙ הַקָּטֹ֔ן אִתְּכֶ֖ם לֹ֣א תֹסִפ֑וּן לִרְאוֹת֙ פָּנָ֔י׃

‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.’ (Gen. 44.23)

In (18) the apodosis is of the type *Ø-lō-yiqṭol(u)*. The future time reference implies a prohibition (a negated obligation). In the example, a *wa-qaṭal* apodosis is replaced by an asyndetic clause. An example with a focused initial constituent is found in (19).

(19) אִם־עֶבֶד יִגַּח הַשּׁוֹר אוֹ אָמָה כֶּסֶף | שְׁלֹשִׁים שְׁקָלִים יִתֵּן לַאדֹנָיו וְהַשּׁוֹר יִסָּקֵל׃
‘If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay *thirty shekels of silver* to the master of the slave, and the bull is to be stoned to death.’ (Exod. 21.32)

In (19) the apodosis has the pattern *Ø-O.noun-yiqṭol(u)* (where *O.noun* means ‘object noun phrase’). In this example, too, the apodosis is asyndetic. The meaning is obligation. The amount of money that the owner must pay has focused position in the legal statement (italicised in the gloss).

*Wa-qaṭal* as a construction and clause-type is basically a clause that follows another clause. It is a clause-type involved in linkage, and this fact should be accounted for when the steps of schematisation are investigated systematically. In this classification the cases when the preceding clause has a *yiqṭol(u)* predicate turn out to be of special importance. There is a close connection between *yiqṭol(u)* and *wa-qaṭal* already in conditional sentences, and it is not surprising that *wa-qaṭal* as a continuity clause-type in the overwhelming number of cases continues a main line *yiqṭol(u)* clause, whatever the meaning of this *yiqṭol(u)* may be (Isaksson 2024, 395–461).

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# THE ORIGINS OF *WAYYIQṬOL*: A FIRST-PERSON ACCOUNT

*Aaron D. Hornkohl*

In what promises to become a groundbreaking study published in 2021, the impact of which is yet fully to be felt (cf. Hornkohl 2023, 373–84, and Isaksson's treatment in the present volume), the honouree proposed a potentially paradigm-shifting theory on the genesis of *wayyiqṭol*.[1] Building on his own work on the phenomenon of secondary gemination in biblical reading traditions (Khan 2018a, 341–47; 2020, I:524–30), on Kantor's (2020) study of Greek and Latin transcriptional evidence for the late differentiation of *wayyiqṭol* and we-*yiqṭol*, and on Robar's (2013) argument against core preterite semantics for *wayyiqṭol*, Khan (2021, 319–40) argues that the Masoretic distinction between *wayyiqṭol* and *we-yiqṭol* owes to secondary disambiguation of a formerly semantically undifferentiated Iron Age *w-yiqṭol* syntagm by means

[1] §§1.0–2.0 of the present article are based, with slight revision, on Hornkohl (2023, 374–80). Limitations of space preclude exhaustiveness of the voluminous bibliography related to *wayyiqṭol*; beyond the standard reference grammars, see Smith (1991); Bloch (2007); Robar (2013); Hornkohl (2014, 159–80); and Gzella (2018).

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of gemination[2] innovated in the interests of orthoepy.[3] Basically, the idea is that preterite *wayyiqṭol* is a secondary schematisation of originally volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol*, which latter semantic value is preserved in Masoretic *we-yiqṭol*. After summarising the supporting evidence for this view and the argument itself, the present article will examine developmental trends in first-person *w-yiqṭol* morphology and assess the extent to which they are consistent with Khan's hypothesis for the origins of *wayyiqṭol*.

## 1.0. Supporting Evidence

### 1.1. Semantic Gemination

Secondary gemination has been shown by Khan (2018a, 341–47; 2020, I:524–30) to be one means of disambiguating perceived homophones in BH recitation traditions. Words with identical

[2] Notwithstanding the modern convention of transcribing *shewa* as an *e*-class vowel (e.g., *ə*, in some standard transcription systems), since the default realisation of *shewa* in Tiberian BH was as short *a*, identical to the realisation of *pataḥ*, the chief distinction between Tiberian *wayyiqṭol* and *we-yiqṭol* was one of gemination, not vowel quality (Kantor 2020, 59, 66–91; Khan 2020, I:305; 2021a, 332).

[3] Broadly speaking, orthoepy refers to correct pronunciation. In the specific context of biblical reading traditions, such careful realisation sometimes resulted, as might be expected, in the preservation of old pronunciations against the encroachment of new ones (e.g., the safeguarding of distinctly realised phonemes and syllables in the face of slurring). Perhaps more surprisingly, it also occasioned innovative ways of disambiguating meaning, though, crucially, such innovations seem to have taken advantage of existing variants (see Khan 2018b).

forms but different meanings could be distinguished via the elongated realisation of a consonant in the case of one of the meanings. Since the gemination is marked by *dagesh* in some biblical traditions, it is sometimes referred to as 'semantic *dagesh*'. Khan collects numerous examples from biblical (Tiberian, Babylonian, Samaritan) and non-biblical (rabbinic) traditions. Examples from Tiberian Hebrew include אֲבִיר 'powerful (divine)' versus אַבִּיר 'powerful (human)', עֻצָּבִים 'toils' versus עֲצַבִּים 'idols', and, probably, הִרְעִים 'make thunder (divine)' versus הִרְעִים 'vex, irritate (human)'. Though innovative and secondary from the perspective of pre-existing reading traditions, Khan (2020, 525) argues that "[t]he gemination in these pairs of forms most likely originates in existing variant morphological patterns that have been exploited to avoid homophony."

## 1.2. Transcriptional Evidence

In a detailed survey of Greek and Latin transcriptional evidence relevant to the development of *wayyiqṭol*, Kantor adduces compelling evidence of diachronic evolution in the form's phonetic realisation. In the late Second Temple Period, writes Kantor (2020, 99–100),

> The conjunction *waw* was ***usually pronounced identically*** before a preterite *yiqṭol* and non-preterite *yiqṭol* form, namely, with no full vowel or following gemination. Nevertheless, the conjunction *waw* was also ***frequently pronounced distinctly*** before a preterite *yiqṭol* form, being vocalised with a full vowel and (probably) gemination…. (emphasis in the original)

Subsequently, in the early Byzantine Period, "The conjunction *waw* was ***always pronounced distinctly*** before a preterite *yiqṭol* form (as opposed to before a non-preterite *yiqṭol*), being vocalised with a full vowel and (probably) gemination…." Extrapolating back along the diachronic trajectory, Kantor argues that in Iron Age BH "the conjunction *waw* was ***pronounced identically*** before a preterite *yiqṭol* and non-preterite *yiqṭol* form, probably with the original etymological */a/ vowel," meaning "that up to some point in the Second Temple period, *yiqṭol* in the sequence **w-yiqṭol* was a polysemous form, indicating either past or non-past (usually jussive) semantics according to context" (emphasis in the original).

Significantly, Kantor (2020, 104–5) follows Khan (1991, 241; 2013, 43) in positing secondary morphological disambiguation of previously undifferentiated *w-yiqṭol* into preterite *way-yiqṭol* and non-preterite *we-yiqṭol* by means of gemination as the most plausible explanation for the gemination in Masoretic *way-yiqṭol*.

While one cannot definitively exclude the possibility that the Tiberian reading tradition preserves an Iron Age distinction between geminated past *waw-yiqṭol* (> *wayyiqṭol*) and singleton non-past *waw-yiqṭol* (> *we-yiqṭol*) by gemination, several lines of argumentation combine to suggest otherwise: (a) the absence of any such distinction in the Samaritan reading tradition,[4] (b) the partial, but increasing use of the distinction in the period of the

[4] For an alternative means of distinguishing preterite *waw-yiqṭol* in the Samaritan reading tradition, i.e., the replacement of *w-yiqṭol* with *w-qaṭal* in I-*y* forms, see Khan (2021, 331); Hornkohl (2023, 448–51).

Greek and Latin transcriptions, (c) the reality of secondary semantic gemination across multiple reading traditions, and (d) multiple cases of dissonance in the Masoretic biblical tradition involving early consonantal orthography vocalised according to a characteristically later reading tradition.[5] Such considerations are arguable evidence that the disambiguation in question took place after the Samaritan and Jewish traditions had diverged, was in the process of taking hold at the time the transcriptions were made, but had become solidly established before the division of the Masoretic Tiberian, Babylonian, and Palestinian branches.

## 1.3. Non-preterite *wayyiqṭol*

Robar (2013; 2015, 78–112; 2021) builds a multi-pronged argument against *wayyiqṭol*'s consensus preterite classification. She sees *wayyiqṭol* as a narrative present of unspecified time reference that takes its TAM (Tense-Aspect-Mood) semantics from the context. While Khan's theory differs from Robar's at important points, he is favourable of her approach and agrees that certain *wayyiqṭol* semantic values are incompatible with core preterite semantics (Khan 2021, 320 fn. 14, 328–29 and fn. 26). In place of fundamental perfective past semantics, he proposes a broader realis value (Khan 2021, 332).

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[5] For recent studies on this topic and further bibliography see Joosten (2015); Hornkohl (2020a; 2020b; 2023); Khan (2020, I:56–85).

## 2.0. The Development of *wayyiqṭol*

Synthesising the aforementioned studies and additional research, Khan (2021, 319–40) employs Construction Grammar (Bybee 2010) to explain the development of *wayyiqṭol* by means of the recognised mechanisms of reanalysis and schematisation. Khan improves upon existing accounts of *wayyiqṭol*'s development in line with its semantic range, pragmatics, and status as the sole standard remnant of archaic preterite short *yiqṭol* (< Proto-Semitic *yaqtul*).

Khan argues that preterite *yiqṭol*'s preservation almost exclusively after *waw* is due to syntactic similarity to a "discourse dependent" (Khan 2021, 320ff.) modal short *yiqṭol* in a (normally) purpose/result *w-yiqṭol* construction, which made preterite *w-yiqṭol* ripe for reanalysis. In this way, the short *yiqṭol*'s originally distinct preterite and modal purpose/result semantics became fused in a semantically undifferentiated *w-yiqṭol* construction.[6] The core semantics of the resulting *w-yiqṭol* had effectively been reduced to the "common denominator" of temporal posteriority relative to preceding context (Khan 2021, 326), which was further schematised to one of broader "topical cognitive relevance" (Khan 2021, 340).

Later, in some Second Temple traditions, the realis (preterite) and irrealis (volitive, often purpose/result) senses of *w-yiqṭol* were disambiguated via gemination of the preformative in realis

[6] Khan (2021a, 319 fn. 13) explicitly sidesteps the question of whether the ancient Hebrew preterite and volitional short *yiqṭol* values are themselves reflexes of a single (Huehnergard 1988) or distinct PS *yaqtul* forms (Hetzron 1969; Rainey 1986).

(mostly preterite) *w-yiqṭol*, resulting in a new distinction between realis (mainly preterite) *wayyiqṭol* and irrealis (volitional, often purpose/result) *we-yiqṭol*.

## 3.0. Addressing Potential Concerns

Beyond elegantly explaining preterite *yiqṭol*'s nearly exclusive clause-initial preservation after *waw*, Khan's proposed Iron Age preterite-volitive/purpose *w-yiqṭol* fusion helps to illuminate *wayyiqṭol's* semantic range: by acknowledging its mixed preterite-modal parentage, the form is revealed to have genetics consistent with non-past and/or non-perfective semantics, such meanings reflecting the archaic tenseless, aspect-free character of *way-yiqṭol's* volitive/purpose *waw-yiqṭol* ancestor. The earlier preterite and volitive semantics, however, gave way in pre-Tiberian BH to a broader sense of temporal consecution and discourse dependency. According to this analysis, any old preterite and non-preterite values did not persist, but had to be inferred from context.

Even so, such a radical reimagining of the pre-Tiberian BH verb system invites scrutiny. For example, one might ask how the disambiguation of preterite and volitive/purposive[7] *w-yiqṭol* forms in proto-Tiberian BH related to the development of the semantically equivalent, but pragmatically distinct X + *qaṭal* sequence (Hornkohl 2018; Isaksson in the present volume). More generally, a potential area of scholarly doubt might revolve around the not trivial question of how the pre-Tiberian BH verb system 'worked' given a semantically undifferentiated *w-yiqṭol*

[7] For comments on the distinction between purely volitive and purposive semantics, see JM 116 note (1).

form, i.e., whether and how users disambiguated preterite and volitive/purposive senses of a *w-yiqṭol* emptied of all but the barest of semantic values (temporal posteriority > discourse dependency). Finally, even if *w-yiqṭol* may have lost its preterite semantics on the way to becoming *wayyiqṭol*, it may well have reacquired strong preterite associations by dint of its use as the default narrative TAM construction. Given reader comfort with the morphological, phonological, graphic, and semantic distinction between *wayyiqṭol* and *we-yiqṭol* in Tiberian BH, doubts and knee-jerk resistance to the viability of a system with no such disambiguation are understandable.

In this connection, several points can be made. The first is that readers of at least one biblical reading tradition with ancient roots—that of the Samaritan Pentateuch—manage regularly to distinguish preterite and volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol* sequences with no phonological or graphic aid. That the interpretive tradition indeed draws a semantic distinction from forms despite their formal identity, is clear from the Samaritan Aramaic and Arabic translations.

Yet, as some might attribute the largely undifferentiated phonology of Samaritan *w-yiqṭol* to a secondary departure from an earlier stage of disambiguation (notwithstanding the evidence from the Greek and Latin transcriptions, adduced above, in §1.2), it is worth noting that the semantics of the vast majority of *w-yiqṭol* sequences in BH are readily intelligible from context and, specifically, from the preceding verb form. Khan himself (2021, 326) notes an important correlation: “In the attested corpus of Biblical Hebrew… purpose and result clauses with jussives have

future main clauses, whereas past *wayyiqṭol* is generally preceded by a past clause." In other words, preceding context must commonly have sufficed for the disambiguation of past versus volitive/purpose/result semantics of *w-yiqṭol* forms. Indeed, according to the extant Masoretic tradition (= MT), there seem to be relatively few instances in which an ancient reader unaided by distinguishing phonology might have been required to read a *w-yiqṭol* form against the TAM value of the immediately preceding verb form. Khan (2021a, 328) cites as potentially ambiguous the *w-yiqṭol* form in (1), arguing that the extant *wayyiqṭol* form may have originally been intended as a volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol*.

(1) לָמָּה אָמַרְתְּ אֲחֹתִי הִוא וְאֶקַּח אֹתָהּ לִי לְאִשָּׁה...
'Why did you say "She is my sister," so that I took her for my wife?...' (Gen. 12.19)

As Hornkohl (2023, 380–81) observes, however, the regular first-person distinction between volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol* augmented with *-ā́* (ואקטלה) and preterite *w-yiqṭol* with no such augmentation (ואקטל), especially in the Pentateuch (see below, §4.1.1), renders this scenario unlikely. Whatever the case, *we-yiqṭol* forms after past TAM forms are rare.[8] Conceding the comparatively late semantic differentiation of *w-yiqṭol*, Hornkohl (2023, 382–83) views the preservation of volitive/purposive semantics after perfective past forms as evidence of a semantically sensitive and nuanced interpretive tradition of great historical depth.

[8] Consider Lev. 9.6; 1 Kgs 13.33; 2 Kgs 19.25; Isa. 41.26; Lam. 1.19. See JM (§§116b note (1), e); Joosten (2012, 154–55).

## 4.0. Factoring in First-person Morphology

The overwhelming majority of the approximately 15,000 *way-yiqṭol* forms in the MT are in the third-person; see Table 1 for the frequency of *wayyiqṭol* and *we-yiqṭol* forms.[9]

Table 1: Frequency of *wayyiqtol* and *we-yiqṭol* forms in the Masoretic text according to grammatical person

| **Person** | ***wayyiqtol*** | ***we-yiqtol*** |
|---|---|---|
| **1st** | 722 (5%) | 557 (38%) |
| **2nd** | 315 (2%) | 78 (5%) |
| **3rd** | 14,072 (93%) | 842 (57%) |

Since Tiberian *wayyiqṭol* and volitive/purpose/result *we-yiqṭol* both contain a prefix conjugation form that developed from Proto-Semitic short, i.e., consonant-final, *yaqtul*, this means that—apart from gemination and, in some cases, syllable stress—the majority of *wayyiqṭol* forms are formally indistinguishable from *we-yiqṭol* forms. The same goes for the far rarer cases of second-person morphology. Indeed, unless syllable stress once distinguished preterite and modal forms (see above, fn. 6), second- and third-person preterite and modal *waw* + *qaṭal* forms may always have been formally identical.

### 4.1. Distribution of *w-yiqṭol* Morphology

When it comes first-person forms, however, a different situation obtains. According to the evidence most reflective of early typol-

[9] The figures are according to searches of the Groves-Wheeler Westminster Hebrew Morphology database (2020) using the Accordance software (version 13.4.2) and include cases of *ketiv* and *qere*.

ogy, namely, the written (i.e., consonantal) component of the Tiberian tradition in the Torah,[10] preterite *w-yiqṭol* and volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol* were morphologically distinct in the first person. The following sections present tables showing the incidence of the relevant forms in the MT and in cognate, extra-biblical, and non-Masoretic biblical sources as well as discuss the data (see Appendix for citations).

### 4.1.1. The Pentateuch

Table 2: First-person *w-yiqṭol* morphology in the Masoretic Pentateuch

| | **preterite** | | **volitive/purposive** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ואקטל | ואקטלה | ואקטלה | ואקטל |
| Genesis | 39 | 3 | 44 | 0 |
| Exodus | 8 | 0 | 11 | 0 |
| Leviticus | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Numbers | 5 | 1 | 6 | 0 |
| Deuteronomy | 41 | 0 | 6 | 1 |
| **Torah** | 101 | 4 | 67 | 1 |

According to the written component of the Masoretic Torah, in the first person a rigid distinction between preterite and volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol* morphology obtains. The dominant preterite form is ואקטל (101 of 105 cases), with extremely rare cases

[10] On the typological antiquity of the Hebrew in the Masoretic Torah, see Elitzur (2015; 2018a; 2018b; 2019; 2022) and Hornkohl (2024). Circumstantial evidence ostensibly indicating the early crystallisation of the Torah's textual and linguistic traditions include, inter alia, its 3rd-century BCE translation into Greek, its comparatively infrequent incidence of *ketiv-qere* dissonance (Barr 1981, 32–33; Tov 2004a, 204 fn. 25); the disproportionate representation of Torah texts among the palaeo-Hebrew DSS (Tov 2004b, 246); and the occurrence in the Judaean Desert of long scrolls apparently containing multiple books of the Torah (Tov 2004b, 75). See, further, Hornkohl (2024, 15–17)

of -*ā́* augmentation (4 cases). Conversely, ואקטלה with -*ā́* augmentation is the rule when it comes to volitive/purposive forms (67 of 68 cases).

### 4.1.2. The Prophets

Table 3: First-person *w-yiqṭol* morphology in the Masoretic Prophets

| | **preterite** | | **volitive/ purposive** | | | **preterite** | | **volitive/ purposive** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ואקטל | ואקטלה | ואקטלה | ואקטל | | ואקטל | ואקטלה | ואקטלה | ואקטל |
| Josh. | 20 | 1 | 0 | 0 | Ezek. | 65 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| Judg. | 9 | 5 | 11 | 3 | Hos. | 1 | 0 | 4 | 3 |
| Sam. | 18 | 7 | 31 | 11 | Amos | 7 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| (1 Sam. | 14 | 2 | 17 | 5) | Obad. | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| (2 Sam. | 4 | 5 | 14 | 6) | Jon. | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Kgs | 17 | 0 | 15 | 6 | Mic. | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| (1 Kgs | 14 | 0 | 6 | 3) | Hab. | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| (2 Kgs | 3 | 0 | 12 | 4) | Hag. | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Isa. | 13 | 0 | 18 | 17 | Zech. | 30 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| (1–39 | 6 | 0 | 12 | 8) | Mal. | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| (40–55 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 9) | **Proph.** | **236** | **19** | **105** | **55** |
| (56–66 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 7) | **Fmr** | **65** | **13** | **57** | **20** |
| Jer. | 51 | 2 | 16 | 8 | **Lat.** | **172** | **6** | **48** | **35** |

In the MT Prophets, the morphological distinction between first-person preterite and volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol* forms remains perceptible, but is maintained less strictly than in the MT Pentateuch. Preterite *w-yiqṭol* forms are still normally ואקטל, i.e., without augmentation (217 of 236 cases). This is especially true of the Latter Prophets (172 of 178 cases; compare 65 of 78 cases in the Former Prophets).

In the case of volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol*, while lengthened ואקטלה morphology with -*ā́* unambiguously marks as modal most volitive/purposive forms (just under two-thirds of the time), in a sizeable minority of the cases (55 of 160), unaugmented morphology obtains. Again, though, there is a discernible difference

between textual blocks: in the Former Prophets, nearly three-quarters of the cases (57 out of 77) end in -*ā̆*; cf. the Latter Prophets, where forms with and without -*ā̆* are more evenly matched (48 against 35).

### 4.1.3. The Writings

Table 4: First-person *w-yiqṭol* morphology in the Masoretic Writings

| | **preterite** | | **volitive/ purposive** | | | **preterite** | | **volitive/ purposive** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ואקטל | ואקטלה | ואקטלה | ואקטל | | ואקטל | ואקטלה | ואקטלה | ואקטל |
| Pss | 9 | 12 | 54 | 9 | Qoh. | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| (119 | 1 | 6 | 17 | 2) | Dan. | 7 | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| (−119 | 8 | 6 | 37 | 7) | Ezra | 4 | 17 | 0 | 0 |
| Job | 9 | 6 | 10 | 8 | Neh. | 36 | 31 | 6 | 1 |
| (prose | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0) | Chron. | 7 | 0 | 6 | 5 |
| (poetry | 9 | 2 | 10 | 8) | (1 Chr. | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0) |
| Prov. | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | (2 Chr. | 5 | 0 | 3 | 5) |
| Ruth | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | **Writ.** | **73** | **77** | **85** | **26** |
| Song | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | **Non-LBH+** | **18** | **8** | **55** | **18** |
| Lam. | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | **LBH+** | **55** | **69** | 30 | **8** |

Noticeably distinguishing the MT Writings from both the MT Torah and Prophets is the Writings' high incidence of preterite ואקטלה morphology with -*ā̆* augmentation (77 out of 150 cases). As LBH+[11] accounts for 69 of the 77 cases of ואקטלה, and as nearly 80 percent of the eligible forms in LBH+ end in -*ā̆*, one may take this as preliminary evidence (see below, §4.1.4) of a diachronic dimension in first-person *wayyiqṭol* morphological variety. But this is not the whole story. The non-LBH+ Writings,

[11] LBH+ is comprised of the core LBH books of Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles—all dated by their content to the post-Restoration period—along with Ps. 119, the prose sections of Job (1–2 and 42.7–17), and Qohelet—each of which exhibits striking concentrations of distinctively post-exilic linguistic features.

with over 30 percent preterite ואקטלה forms, also show a comparatively high incidence, perhaps indicating a genre-based correlation between ואקטלה and poetry.

When it comes to volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol*, the Writings, with 77 percent augmented ואקטלה, most closely resemble the Former Prophets, with 74 percent augmented ואקטלה. Unlike the Torah, both corpora show sizeable minorities of unaugmented volitive/purposive ואקטל forms.

### 4.1.4. Cognate, Extra-biblical, Non-Masoretic Biblical Material

Table 5: First-person *w-yiqṭol* morphology in cognate, extra-biblical, non-Masoretic biblical material

| | **preterite** | | **volitive/purposive** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ואקטל | ואקטלה | ואקטלה | ואקטל |
| Mesha‘ | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tel Dan | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Non-biblical DSS | 4 | 24 | 59 | 13 |
| Samaritan Pentateuch | 70 | 34 | 47 | 23 |
| Biblical DSS | 30 | 18 | 65 | 32 |
| Ben Sira[12] | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 |

#### Iron Age Cognate Material

In typological agreement with the Masoretic Pentateuch, Iron Age Moabite and Aramaic material has no first-person preterite *w-yiqṭol* morphology with *-ā̆* augmentation, showing only ואקטל. This is significant, given the apparently routine orthographic representation of final vowels in the relevant corpora (on Moabite,

[12] The figures for Ben Sira differ from those in Hornkohl (2023, 412) due to the ambiguity of some forms' TAM values.

see Hornkohl 2023, 312). Neither corpus contains examples of first-person volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol*.

## The Non-biblical Dead Sea Scrolls

As Second Temple compositions (rather than copies of earlier material), the evidence of the NBDSS is likely to furnish the most authentic representation of Second Temple linguistic conventions. Their fragmentary nature, though, necessitates caution (in the case of first-person *w-yiqṭol* forms, especially as there are many instances of broken endings. In the NBDSS, augmented ואקטלה morphology prevails for both preterite semantics (24 of 28 cases) and volitive/purposive semantics (56 of 65 cases; cf. the case of the Masoretic Former Prophets, above, §4.1.2, Table 3). This has been explained as the result of a wholesale morphological reorganisation whereby clause-initial position became associated with ואקטלה morphology (Qimron 1997; 2018, 165–69).

## The Samaritan Pentateuch

Erosion of morphological distinction is also conspicuous in the case of the Samaritan Pentateuch as compared to the corresponding Masoretic material. Though favouring non-augmented preterite ואקטל and augmented volitive/purposive ואקטלה, SH exhibits significant minorities of the respective alternants (preterite ואקטלה 34 of 104 and volitive/purposive ואקטל 23 of 70 cases, respectively; cf. Masoretic Pentateuch 4 of 105 and 1 of 69 cases, respectively). Notably, there is no difference between the written

and reading components of the Samaritan tradition concerning augmented versus non-augmented *w-yiqṭol* morphology.[13]

## The Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls

The incomplete and fragmentary textual coverage of the BDSS necessitates going beyond raw statistics when one seeks to characterise the corpus's linguistic profile. This is because the extant material might, by chance, preserve an otherwise uncharacteristic cross-section of forms. Even so, from a case-by-case comparison with the MT, it emerges that the BDSS incidence is not merely a chance function of the vagaries of preservation, but indeed reflects loss of morphological distinction. Thus, as Hornkohl (2023, 404–6) shows, while the extant BDSS and MT most often correspond in terms of preterite first-person *w-yiqṭol* morphology, the cases of mismatch that occur most often involve BDSS ואקטלה versus MT ואקטל (see Appendix).[14]

When it comes to volitive/purposive first-person *w-yiqṭol* morphology, the BDSS resemble SH (see above) in presenting a sizeable minority of ואקטל forms not augmented with *-ā́*. That this has linguistic significance, despite the patchy and partial manuscript coverage, is shown by the fact that cases of mismatch involving MT ואקטלה paralleled by BDSS ואקטל far outnumber the reverse (see Appendix).

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[13] The Samaritan written tradition is that of the Shekhem Synagogue 6 (C) manuscripts; the reading tradition is that recorded in Ben-Ḥayyim (1977).

[14] This is true even if one excludes 1QIsa[a]'s disproportionately extensive, but linguistically exceptional, testimony (see Hornkohl 2023, 405–6).

### Ben Sira

In the admittedly small sample set afforded by the Ben Sira manuscripts, first-person preterite *w-yiqṭol* forms show a mix of ואקטל and ואקטלה forms, whereas volitive/purposive semantics are represented exclusively by ואקטלה forms.

## 4.1.5. Summary

Examination of the incidence of first-person *w-yiqṭol* morphosemantics in the ancient Hebrew and cognate sources examined above reveals a clear diachronic dimension. In typologically early material, morphology disambiguates semantics: preterite ואקטל and volitive/purposive ואקטלה are kept rigidly distinct. According to later material, there is something of a conflation of the formerly dedicated forms. In the case of preterite semantics, the early preference for non-augmented ואקטל morphology gives way to increasingly frequent ואקטלה forms, with a proliferation of preterite ואקטלה noticeable in Second Temple material.

Volitive/purposive semantics undergoes the reverse switch: early ואקטלה to later mixed usage of ואקטלה and ואקטל. But there are significant differences compared to the case of preterite *w-yiqtol*. First, the shift from augmented ואקטלה to non-augmented ואקטל morphology is not as clearcut: despite increased use of ואקטל, ואקטלה remains dominant in pre-rabbinic Hebrew. Second, the common use of ואקטל alongside ואקטלה apparently begins far earlier than the Second Temple Period, since it already characterises Tiberian CBH books beyond the Pentateuch. It is worth mentioning that the latter development is in line with another,

perhaps related, distinction that separates the Tiberian Pentateuch (and Iron Age cognate sources) from the rest of the MT and late extra-biblical and biblical material, namely, the shift from short to long preterite *w-yiqṭol* morphology in the case of III-*y* (ואבן > ואבנה), II-*w/y* (ואקם > ואקום), and *hifʿil* verbs (ואבדל > ואבדיל), as seen in both the written and pronunciation components of the tradition (see Hornkohl 2023, 419–21; 2024, 52–54).

## 4.2. Discussion

On the basis of the data, it is possible to add some detail relevant to Khan's theory on the genesis of *wayyiqṭol*, especially in terms of the supposed historical depth of the developmental processes. According to Khan, Iron Age BH was characterised by a semantically undifferentiated *w-yiqṭol*. Indeed, notwithstanding awareness of previous scholarship postulating a convergence of the preterite and directive–volitive *yiqṭol* paradigms in LBH (Bergsträsser 1918–1929, II:§5d; Talshir 1986), Khan (2021, 321–22) argues explicitly that "this had taken place already in Classical Biblical Hebrew." Among his pieces of evidence is the sporadic appearance in the Masoretic Torah of preterite *w-yiqṭol* in the ואקטלה form normally associated with volitive/purposive semantics (Khan 2021, 327–28).

On the assumption that *wayyiqṭol* is due to secondary schematisation of originally volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol*, one can understand why Khan sees the sporadic CBH incidence of preterite ואקטלה as evidence of the process's historical depth. Consider the semantic similarity of the following examples, (2) and (3) hypothetical, and (4) authentic:

(2) *אֲגָרֵשׁ אוֹתָם מִפְּנֵיכֶם וְאֶתְּנָה לָכֶם אֶת־אַרְצָם
*‘I will drive them out before you in order to give you their land’ (Judg. 6.9b, adapted)

(3) *וְאֲגָרֵשׁ אוֹתָם מִפְּנֵיכֶם וְאֶתְּנָה לָכֶם אֶת־אַרְצָם
*‘And I drove them out before you in order to give you their land’ (Judg. 6.9b, adapted)

(4) וְאֲגָרֵשׁ אוֹתָם מִפְּנֵיכֶם וָאֶתֵּנָה לָכֶם אֶת־אַרְצָם
‘And I drove them out before you and I gave you their land’ (Judg. 6.9b)

The use of *w-yiqṭol* in (3) serves as a developmental bridge between the prototypical FUTURE/MODAL + (DEPENDENT) PURPOSIVE sequence in (2) and the prototypical PERFECTIVE PAST + (DEPENDENT) PERFECTIVE PAST sequence in (4). It takes little imagination to comprehend how uses like (3) could be inferred to mean (4)—and how a subsequent desire for semantic differentiation might eventually lead to secondary phonological/morphological differentiation. In this way Khan explains the intermittent early appearance of preterite ואקטלה, which in the Second Temple Period multiplies. This interpretation of the data is also not inconsistent with the situation in the more common third-person and rarer second-person forms, where there was less morphological variation.

While there is consensus that preterite ואקטלה incorporates augmented cohortative *yiqṭol*, one of Khan’s innovations is the linking of preterite ואקטל to the first-person *jussive* with short *yiqṭol* morphology. Khan (2021, 335–36) finds support for this view in Amarna Canaanite, where all grammatical persons appear in all three prefix forms: *yaqtulu*, *yaqtul*, and *yaqtula*. He further follows Baranowski (2016, 166–68) in positing a special

dependent purposive role for the Amarna Canaanite short *yaqtul*, which is to be distinguished from the directive–volitive modality of the longer *yaqtula* (*pace* Moran 1960; Dallaire 2014, 131–32).

Khan's main focus is on the development of *wayyiqṭol* from a formerly purposive *w-yiqṭol* sequence that came to be construed as a construction signalling preterite semantics. His developmental scheme is consistent with the diachronic data on ואקטלה: sporadic in typologically early material, common, but by no means dominant, in poetry and late texts.

Khan says less about the diachrony of volitive/purposive *w-yiqṭol* morphological variety. In light of the situation in Amarna Canaanite, with first-person modal forms manifesting in both the short jussive and augmented cohortative patterns, their incidence and distribution in BH is intriguing. For while short *yaqtul* jussives are well documented in the first person in Canaanite, the BH incidence of such forms, as gauged on the basis of III-*y*, II-*w/y*, and *hifʿil* verbs, is negligible (JM 114g).[15] Not only this, but a diachronically sensitive survey of the evidence reveals some unexpected details when it comes to the use and non-use of volitive/purposive forms with and without *-ā̆* augmentation. First, the Masoretic Torah presents just one case of volitive/purposive ואקטל (Deut. 10.2), against 67 cases of volitive/purposive ואקטלה.

[15] Potential cases include וְלֹא־נַשְׂאֵר (1 Sam. 14.36, despite the indicative negative particle), וְאֵרֵא (Isa. 41.28), וְאַחֲזֵק (Isa. 42.6), and וְאֶט (Hos. 11.4). Other short first-person *yiqṭol* forms should perhaps be analysed as archaic preterites: וְלֹא־אֶחַז (Job 23.9), וְלֹא־אֶט (Job 23.11). Allegedly relevant cases of אסף are to be construed as *qal* forms of the *yafʿel* pattern (Huehnergard 2005; Hornkohl 2023, 245).

This is significant, because it has been shown on the basis of a series of linguistic details, that the written tradition of the Tiberian Pentateuch preserves the earliest typological phase of BH (Hornkohl 2024). The lack of clear-cut cases of short jussive ואקטל in this material, thus, implies that the process by which short jussive ואקטל ceded its role of encoding dependent volitive/purposive semantics to the augmented cohortative ואקטלה was by the time of CBH a *fait accompli*.

Second, against expectations, the pre-CBH expression of dependent volitive/purposive semantics via non-augmented ואקטל—which, again, is all but absent from the CBH of the Pentateuch—is found in Masoretic CBH beyond the Pentateuch, where it comprises minorities, sometimes sizeable, of the relevant forms. Of course, this should not be interpreted as denoting a re-emergence of the short first-person jussive, since the forms in question merely lack *-ā̆* augmentation, rather than exhibit unambiguous short morphology (as should be evident in the case of weak and *hifʿil* verbs). Rather, as Khan himself (2021, 337–38) observes, in addition to the proposed *w-yiqṭol* merger, there was a more general reduction in *yiqṭol* morphological variation. Analogical pressure resulted in the unification of the short, long, and augmented patterns into a single undifferentiated *yiqṭol* formally identical to the standard indicative *yiqṭol* derived from Proto-Semitic *yaqtulu*. This process is uncharacteristic of the linguistic tradition preserved in the Masoretic Pentateuch, but more or less typical of the traditions of all other corpora, biblical and extra-

biblical, Masoretic and non-Masoretic.[16] The culmination of the process is seen in RH, where *yiqṭol* morphological diversity is preserved only in quotations from the Bible or in allusions thereto.

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[16] The linguistic uniqueness of the Masoretic Torah in this connection may be regarded as a further example of the difference between $CBH_1$ and $CBH_2$, as recently proposed by Hornkohl (2024).

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## Appendix

### Masoretic Tradition

#### Pentateuch

**Preterite—ואקטל:** Gen. 3.10, 10, 12, 13; 12.19; 16.5; 20.6, 13; 24.39, 42, 42, 45, 47, 47, 47, 48, 48; 26.28; 27.33; 31.10, 11; 32.5; 39.14, 15, 18; 40.11, 11, 11; 41.12, 21, 24; 42.31; 43.7, 21; 44.20, 22, 24, 26, 28; Exod. 3.8, 17; 4.23; 6.5; 19.4, 4; 31.3; 32.24; Lev. 7.34; 17.14; 18.25; 20.23, 24, 26; 26.13, 13; Num. 8.18; 20.15, 16; 21.30; 31.50; Deut. 1.9, 15, 15, 19, 19, 19, 20, 23, 29, 43; 2.1, 1, 8, 8, 13, 26, 34, 34; 3.4, 6, 8, 23, 29; 9.9, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 21, 21, 25, 26, 26; 10.3, 5, 5; 22.14; 26.7; 29.4, 7; **ואקטלה:** Gen. 32.6; 41.11; 43.21; Num. 8.19; **volitive/purposive—ואקטלה:** Gen. 11.3, 7; 12.2, 3; 13.9, 9; 17.2; 18.5, 30, 32; 19.5, 32; 22.5; 23.4, 13; 24.56, 57; 26.28; 27.4, 7, 25, 41; 29.21, 27; 30.25, 26, 28; 32.10; 33.12, 12; 34.12; 35.3; 42.34; 43.4, 8, 8; 44.21; 45.18; 46.31, 31; 47.16; 49.1; 50.5, 5; Exod. 3.18; 4.18; 5.3; 8.4; 9.28; 14.4, 12, 17; 20.19; 24.12; 33.5; Num. 9.8; 11.13; 14.4; 21.16; 22.19; 23.3; Deut. 5.31; 13.7, 14; 31.28, 28; 32.1; **ואקטל:** Deut. 10.2

#### Prophets

**Preterite—ואקטל:** Josh. 2.11; 7.7; 9.24; 14.7; 22.26, 28; 24.3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 6, 8 (*q*), 8, 10, 11, 12, 13; Judg. 2.1, 1; 6.8, 9, 9; 10.10; 12.2; 19.18; 20.6; 1 Sam. 1.15; 10.14, 18; 12.1, 10; 13.12, 12; 15.20, 20, 24;

24.11; 25.35; 28.21, 21; 2 Sam. 1.7, 8 (*q*), 10, 10; 1 Kgs 2.8, 42; 3.17, 21, 21; 8.16, 20, 20, 21; 14.8; 18.13; 19.10, 14; 21.6; 2 Kgs 6.29, 29; 10.13; Isa. 6.5, 8, 8, 11; 8.3; 24.16; 41.9; 45.4; 48.5; 50.7; 51.16; 64.4, 5; Jer. 1.6, 11, 13; 2.7; 3.7, 8, 19; 4.10; 5.7; 7.13, 13, 25; 8.6, 13; 11.5, 8; 13.2, 5, 7, 7, 7; 14.13; 15.17; 18.3; 23.38; 24.3; 25.3, 17; 31.18; 32.8, 10, 10, 10, 10, 11, 12, 16; 35.3, 4, 5, 5, 8, 10, 10, 11, 11, 15, 17; 42.21; 44.4, 17; Ezek. 1.24, 28, 28; 2.2; 3.2, 12, 14, 15, 15 (*q*), 15, 23, 23, 23; 4.14; 8.5, 8, 10; 9.8, 8; 10.20; 11.13, 13, 13, 25; 16.6, 6, 6, 8, 8, 8, 8, 9, 12, 27, 50; 20.5, 5, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 18, 21, 26, 29; 21.5; 22.26, 30, 31; 23.43; 24.18, 20; 28.18; 31.15, 15; 36.18, 19, 21; 37.3; 39.23, 24; 43.3, 6; 44.4; Hos. 3.3; Amos 2.9, 10, 11; 7.2, 5, 8; 8.2; Mic. 3.1; 6.4; Hag. 1.11; Zech 1.9; 2.1, 2, 4, 5, 6; 3.5; 4.2 (*q*), 4, 5, 11, 12, 13; 5.1, 1, 2, 6, 9, 10; 6.1, 1, 4; 11.7, 8, 9, 10, 10, 12, 13, 14; Mal. 1.2, 3; **ואקטלה:** Josh. 24.8 (*k*); Judg 6.9, 10; 10.12; 12.3, 3; 1 Sam. 2.28; 28.15; 2 Sam. 4.10; 7.9; 12.8, 8; 22.24; Jer. 11.18; 32.9; Ezek. 3.3; 9.8; 16.11; Zech. 11.13; **volitive/purposive—ואקטלה:** Judg. 1.3; 6.39; 9.29; 11.6, 37; 16.28; 18.5; 19.11, 13, 28; 20.13; 1 Sam. 9.5, 9; 11.3, 14; 12.7; 14.1, 6, 12, 36; 15.16; 17.10, 44; 26.11; 27.5; 28.7, 7, 22; 2 Sam. 3.21, 21; 12.8; 14.7, 32; 15.14; 16.9; 17.1, 1, 3, 5; 18.19; 20.16, 21; 1 Kgs 13.7; 18.1; 19.20; 20.25; 21.2; 22.7; 2 Kgs 3.11; 4.22, 22; 5.5; 6.2, 19; 7.4, 9, 9, 13; 18.23; 19.23; Isa. 1.18, 24, 25, 25, 26; 2.3, 5; 5.19; 8.2; 18.4; 25.9; 36.8; 41.22, 22, 23, 23, 23; 43.28; 49.20; 51.23; 55.3; 56.12; Jer. 4.5; 5.5; 6.5, 10; 7.3; 8.14; 9.1, 1; 17.14; 18.18; 20.10, 10; 31.18; 33.3; 46.16; 51.10; Hos. 2.9; 6.1, 3; 14.3; Amos 8.5, 5; Obad. 1; Jon. 1.7, 7; Mic. 1.8; 4.2; Hab. 2.1; Hag. 1.8 (*q*); Mal. 3.7; **ואקטל:** Judg. 16.20, 26; 19.11; 1 Sam. 7.5; 11.14; 12.3, 3; 20.11; 2 Sam. 10.12; 15.7; 17.2; 19.27, 27, 38; 1 Kgs 11.21; 12.9; 20.31; 2 Kgs 4.10; 6.13; 19.23, 24; Isa. 1.25; 7.6; 10.13, 13; 14.13; 37.24, 24, 25; 41.23 (*k*) (?), 26; 42.6, 14; 43.4, 28; 44.19; 46.4; 49.5; 57.17, 18; 63.5, 5, 6, 6; 64.4; Jer. 3.19; 5.1; 8.14; 17.14; 35.11; 40.4; 42.12; 51.9; Ezek. 2.1; 13.15; Hos. 5.14; 13.8, 11; Hag. 1.8 (*k*); Zech. 1.3; 8.10; 11.5; Mal. 1.4

### Writings

**Preterite—ואקטל:** Ps. 18.24; 20.9; 44.21; 55.7; 73.13; 77.11; 95.10; 119.52; 139.11; Job 5.3; 19.10; 29.18; 30.19; 31.34; 32.6; 38.10, 10, 11; Lam. 3.18; Dan. 8.3, 16; 8.27, 27; 10.5, 9; 12.7; Ezra 8.21, 32, 32; 10.2; Neh. 1.5; 2.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 15, 15, 17, 18, 20, 20; 4.3, 3, 7, 7, 8, 8, 9, 13; 5.7, 9 (*q*), 12; 6.4; 7.1, 3 (*q*), 5, 5; 13.7, 15; 1 Chron. 17.8, 10; 2 Chron. 6.6, 6, 10, 10, 11; **ואקטלה:** Ps. 3.6; 7.5; 69.12, 21; 73.16; 90.10; 119.55, 59, 106, 131, 147, 158; Job 1.15, 16, 17, 19; 19.20; 29.17; Qoh. 1.17; Dan. 8.13, 15, 17; 9.3, 4, 4; 10.16, 16, 19; 12.8; Ezra 7.28; 8.15, 16, 17, 17, 23, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 31; 9.3, 3, 5, 5, 6; Neh. 1.4; 2.1, 6, 9, 13; 5.7, 7, 8, 13; 6.3, 8, 11, 12; 7.5; 12.31; 13.7, 8, 9, 9, 10, 11, 11, 13, 17, 17, 19, 19, 21, 21, 22, 30; **volitive/purposive—ואקטלה:** Ps. 2.3, 8; 7.18; 9.3; 21.14; 26.6; 27.6, 6; 31.8; 34.4; 39.14; 40.6; 41.11; 42.5; 43.4; 50.7, 7, 21; 51.18; 55.3, 7; 57.8; 66.16; 77.2; 80.4, 8, 20; 81.9; 86.12; 90.14, 14; 95.6; 108.2; 118.24; 119.15, 17, 18, 27, 34, 44, 45, 46, 48, 63, 73, 88, 115, 117, 125, 134, 146; 139.8; 145.1, 2; Job 6.10; 9.27; 10.20; 13.13; 15.17; 16.4, 6; 23.5, 7; 30.26; Prov. 27.11; Ruth 2.2; 4.4 (*q*); Song 1.4; 3.2; Lam. 3.40, 40; 5.21 (*q*); Dan. 1.12; Neh. 5.2, 2, 3; 6.2, 7, 10; 1 Chron. 13.3; 19.13; 21.2; 2 Chron. 1.10, 10; 18.6; **ואקטל:** Ps. 4.9; 51.9; 55.13, 13; 59.17; 90.12; 119.47, 48, 163; Job 3.11, 13; 13.19; 23.15; 29.25, 25; 31.17; 41.3; Ruth 4.4 (*k*); Lam. 3.8; 5.21 (*k*); Neh. 10.32; 2 Chron. 7.14, 14; 10.9; 14.6; 20.9

## Cognate, Extra-biblical, Non-Masoretic Biblical Material

### Mesha‘

**Preterite—ואקטל:** *KAI* 181 1.11, 11, 12, 13, 14–15, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 30, 32

### Tel Dan

**Preterite—ואקטל:** *KAI* 310 1.5, 6, 9

## Non-biblical Dead Sea Scrolls

**Preterite—ואקטל:** 4Q364 f26bii + e.1, 2; 4Q386 f1ii.2; 4Q391 f36.2; **ואקטלה:** 1QH$^{a}$ 12.37; 14.9, 10; 15.23; 17.9, 10; 1Q49 f1.1; 4Q381 f45a + b.1, 1, 2; 4Q385 f2.9; 4Q385a f1a–bii.6, 7; f15i.5; 4Q387 f1.7; 4Q389 f2.4, 5; f6.1; 4Q390 f1.6, 6; 4Q437 f2ii.13; 4Q504 f1–2Rv.17; 11Q5 28.5; 11Q19 65.8; **volitive/purposive—ואקטלה:** 1QS 10.16; 1QpHab 6.13; 1QM 13.13, 13; 1QH$^{a}$ 4.29; 5.37; 7.24, 26, 36; 8.22, 29; 9.25; 11.21, 21; 12.23; 13.35; 17.8, 13, 14; 18.33, 36; 19.8, 9, 20; 20.6; 21.5, 7; 22.13; fA8.2; 4Q171 f1–2ii.6; 4Q179 f1ii.2; 4Q185 f4ii.3; 4Q216 2.12; 7.8; 4Q266 f1a–b.5; 4Q299 f26.2; f59.7; 4Q300 f8.4; 4Q379 f18.3; 4Q381 f15.3; f33ab + 35.5; f45a + b.1; f47.3; 4Q382 f23.1; 4Q389 f2.7; 4Q391 f20.2; 4Q426 f1ii.3; 4Q427 f1.3; f2.2; f3.3; f8i.9; 4Q438 f3.1; 4Q443 f1.6; 4Q511 f42.7; f7 + 5ii.7; 11Q19 29.8; 54.10, 21; 55.4; **ואקטל:** 1QH$^{a}$ 19.20; 4Q222 f2.3; 4Q368 f3.4; 4Q372 f1.23, 25; 4Q378 f6ii.6; 4Q381 f33ab + 35.3; f45a + b.1, 1, 2; f47.2; 4Q521 f2iii.1; 11Q19 59.7

## Samaritan Pentateuch

**Preterite—ואקטל:** Gen. 3.10, 10, 12, 13; 12.19; 16.5; 20.6, 13; 24.39, 42, 42, 45, 47, 47, 47, 48, 48; 26.28; 27.33; 31.10, 11; 32.5; 39.14, 15, 18; 40.11, 11, 11; 41.11 (≠ MT), 12, 21, 24; 42.31; 43.7, 21 (≠ MT), 21; 44.20, 22, 24, 26; Exod. 4.23; 19.4, 4; 31.3; 32.24; Lev. 7.34; 17.14; 18.25; 20.23, 24, 26; 26.13; Num. 8.18; 20.15, 16; 31.50; Deut. 1.9, 15, 15, 19, 20, 23, 29; 2.1; 3.8, 29; 9.9; 26.7; 29.4, 7; **ואקטלה:** Gen. 32.6 (= MT); Exod. 3.8, 17; 6.5; Lev. 26.13; Num. 8.19 (= MT); Deut. 1.19, 19, 43; 2.1, 8 + (MT —), 8, 8, 13, 26, 34, 34; 3.4, 6, 23; 9.15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 21, 21, 25, 26, 26; 10.3, 5, 5; 22.14; **volitive/purposive—ואקטלה:** Gen. 11.3; 12.2; 18.30, 32; 19.32; 23.4, 13; 24.56; 26.28; 27.7, 41; 30.25, 26, 28; 33.12, 12; 35.3; 42.34; 43.4, 8, 8; 44.21; 46.31; 49.1; 50.5, 5; Exod. 3.18; 4.18; 5.3, 17; 6.9 +; 8.23; 14.4, 12, 17; 20.18 +; 33.5; Num. 9.8; 22.19; 23.3; Deut. 5.28; 10.2 (≠ MT); 13.7, 14; 31.28, 28; 32.1; **ואקטל:** Gen. 12.3; 18.5; 19.5; 22.5; 24.57; 27.4, 25; 29.21, 27;

30.37+ (MT —); 32.10; 34.12; 45.18; 46.31; 47.16; Exod. 8.4; 9.28; 20.18b; 24.12; Num. 11.13; 14.4; 21.16, 30

## Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls

**Preterite—ואקטל:** 1QIsa[a] 5.25; 6.1; 7.20; 19.13; 38.10; 1Q8 17.6; 19.16; 4Q1 f9.4, 5; 4Q3 f1ii.18 (≠ MT Gen. 41.10); 4Q31 2.12; 4Q35 f1.11; f5–6.7; 4Q56 f27.3; f36.2; 4Q60 f9–10.2; 4Q70 f3+4i+5–7.8; f21–22i.2, 5; 4Q72 f23–24.4; 4Q112 f14.13; f15.18 (≠ MT Dan. 10.19); 5/6Hev1b f6–7.10; Mur1 f5ii.1; 14.34; Mur88 21.38; Mas1d 2.3, 8; 3.5; **ואקטלה:** 1QIsa[a] 6.2 (≠ MT Isa. 6.8), 5 (≠ MT Isa. 6.11); 34.12 (≠ MT Isa. 41.9); 40.10 (≠ MT Isa. 48.5); 42.8 (≠ MT Isa. 50.7); 51.20 (≠ MT Isa. 64.5); 4Q13 f3ii+5–6i.8 (≠ MT Exod. 3.17); 4Q51 3a–e.25; 9e–i.16; f61ii+63–64a–b+65–67.3; 4Q80 f8–13.19 (≠ MT Zech. 4.4); f14–15.4 (≠ MT Zech. 5.10); 4Q83 f19ii–20.31; 4Q113 f16–18i+19.5 (≠ MT Dan. 8.3); 11Q5 9.1; 11.2; 12.4; 13.9; 20.2 (≠ MT Ps. 139.11); **volitive/purposive—ואקטלה:** 1QIsa[a] 1.21, 29; 2.10, 14; 14.28; 29.11; 31.2 (≠ MT Isa. 37.24), 3 (≠ MT Isa. 37.25); 33.6 (≠ וְאֶמַּר MT Isa. 40.6); 34.29, 29; 35.1, 2; 35.4, 5 (≠ MT Isa. 41.26), 16 (≠ MT Isa. 42.6), 24 (≠MT Isa. 42.14); 37.6 (≠ MT Isa. 43.28); 37.25 (≠ MT Isa. 44.19); 39.10 (≠ MT Isa. 46.4); 41.2 (≠ MT Isa. 49.5), 20; 43.13; 46.26; 47.17 (≠ MT Isa. 57.17); 51.2 (≠ MT Isa. 63.6), 2 (≠ MT Isa. 63.6); 53.23 (≠ MT וְעָצַרְתִּי Isa. 63.5); 1Q8 18.5 (≠ MT Isa. 43.4); 24.30; 25.2 (≠ MT Isa. 57.18); 27.14 (≠ MT Isa. 63.5), 14 (≠ MT Isa. 63.5), 15 (≠ MT Isa. 63.6), 15 (≠ MT Isa. 63.6); 4Q1 f22ii+26.9 (≠ MT נִזְבְּחָה Exod. 5.8); 4Q11 f10ii.4; 4Q29 f5–8.5; 4Q38 f1.4; 4Q57 f44–47.13; 4Q59 f1.3; f4–10.1; 4Q70 f29.4; 4Q135 f1.7; 4Q137 f1.56; 11Q5 7.1, 3, 4; 8.8, 8, 10, 11 (≠ MT Ps. 119.47), 12; 10.7; 11.11, 13; 12.7; 13.15; 16.8, 9; XQ2 1.13; Mur88 10.11, 11; 12.5; 13.21; **ואקטל:** 1QIsa[a] 1.28 (≠ MT Isa. 1.24), 1.29 (≠ MT Isa. 1.25); 5.6 (≠ MT Isa. 5.19); 6.20; 9.28, 28; 17.7; 20.8 (≠ MT Isa. 25.9); 31.2; 32.7 (≠ וְאֶמַּר MT Isa. 38.15); 37.6 (≠ MT Isa. 43.28); 45.22 (≠ MT Isa. 55.33); 46.26 (≠ MT אֶקְחָה־ Isa. 56.12); 47.17 (≠ MT הַסְתֵּר Isa. 57.17), 18; 51.1, 1, 19; 1Q8 25.1; 4Q56 f31ii.2; 4Q58 11.24 (≠ MT הַסְתֵּר Isa. 57.17), 24; 4Q85

f15ii–16.27 (≠ MT Ps. 50.21); 4Q99 f1.4; 4Q101 f1–2.2; 11Q5 8.12; 11.13 (≠ MT וְאֶשְׁעֶה Ps. 119.117); Mur2 f1i.2

## Ben Sira

**Preterite—ואקטל:** 51.9 (SirB 20v.5); 51.10 (SirB 20v.5); 51.14 (SirB 21r.12); 51.19 (SirB 21r.17); **ואקטלה:** 51.8 (SirB 20v.3); 51.12 (SirB 20v.11); 51.12 (SirB 20v.11); **volitive/purposive—ואקטלה:** 42.15 (Mas1h 5.1); 42.15 (SirB 12r.6); 51.18 (11Q5 21.15)

# FRONTING IN THE PROTASES OF אִם CONDITIONALS

*Christo H. J. van der Merwe*

Geoffrey Khan has been interested in the interpretation of word order (especially, the functional value of moving a clause constituent from its canonical position to another position in a clause) since the beginning of his career. In 2020, he co-authored an article with me in which we seek to provide a more comprehensive model for the interpretation of fronting in Biblical Hebrew (BH) verbal clauses. One of the main theses of our study reads as follows: "A key feature of our model is the recognition that fronting constructions include both categorical sentences, which make a predication about a base of predication, and also thetic sentences, which present a unitary situation" (Khan and van der Merwe 2020, 347). That study, which limited its data set to 1 Samuel, makes a distinction between (i) narrow constituent focus constructions, (ii) selecting topic constructions, and (iii) thetic constructions.

The purpose of the present exploratory research is to employ insights of the theoretical framework of the above-mentioned study to investigate fronting in a very specific type of construction in the entire Tanakh, viz. the protasis of conditionals introduced by אִם. Why this focus on the protasis of conditionals

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introduced by אִם? First, all instances of this clause type in the Tanakh are given to relatively straightforward identification and collection on the basis of their formal features.[1]

Second, the protases of conditionals always involve the establishment of a specific alternative or alternatives—a key concept in the identification of topic selection and narrow constituent focus. The alternatives might be (1) *if (protasis) A, then (apodosis) B*, or (2) *if not A, then B*. The alternatives might also be *if* $A^1$ *and if* $A^n$*, then B*. See example (7).

Third, given the nature of the protases of conditionals referred to above, it is reasonable to assume that the most prototypical function of fronting in protases with finite verbs is the selection of alternative topics. The question is: is the notion of "selecting topic constructions" as defined in Khan and Van der Merwe adequate to describe the function of fronting in the protases of conditionals—in particular the selection of alternative topics? Khan and Van der Merwe (2020, 370) state "In categorical sentences with a fronted constituent that fall into this category both the fronted constituent *and* the following predication contain a focus. The focused fronted entity establishes the topic that acts as the base of predication" (italics added) (e.g., וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ וְיהוֹנָתָן בָּא הָעִיר 'He got up and left; but *Jonathan*—went into the city' 1 Sam. 21.1)'. The dilemma is that in protases with a fronted

[1] In some instances, however, the function of אִם is difficult to interpret, e.g., Ps. 131.2; Job 36.29. A few instances are excluded from this investigation on text-critical grounds, i.e., Deut. 32.30; Ruth 3.12; Job 30.24; Prov. 24.11; Ezek. 35.6; Hos. 12.12.

non-verbal constituent, that constituent is the only focus of the clause. See examples (22)–(40).

This, fourthly, leads one to the question: is the fronting in protases introduced by אִם rather a type of narrow focus? According to Khan and Van der Merwe (2020, 362) "a construction with a fronted constituent in narrow focus is used where the speaker/writer informs the reader of the identity of a variable in a presupposition in the common ground." A typical example of narrow focus can be found 1 Sam. 26.6b מִֽי־יֵרֵד אִתִּי אֶל־שָׁא֔וּל אֶל־הַֽמַּחֲנֶ֖ה וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֲבִישַׁ֔י *אֲנִ֖י* אֵרֵ֥ד עִמָּֽךְ׃ "'*Who* will go down with me into the camp to Saul?" Abishai said, "*I* will go down with you.'" For Khan and Van der Merwe, this example is an instance of non-exhaustive completive focus. Other types of narrow focus are exhaustive completive, restricting, selective, replacing, expanding, and scalar focus (2020, 236–369).

The primary research questions of this study are as follows: can the fronted constituent of the clause immediately following אִם be regarded as a type of narrow focus? If yes, what type of narrow focus is it? If not, given the realities referred to in the two paragraphs above, can any thetic constructions be identified? Since a protasis may consist of more than one clause, and since fronted constituents may on occasion be restricted to the second or third clauses, a secondary research question is: what is the function of the fronting in those instances?[2] It is assumed that in

[2] In about 13 percent (40/303) of the cases, the apodosis has a fronted non-verbal constituent. These instances are listed in italics. Space constraints preclude systematic discussion of the function of the fronting.

order to address our research questions, a profile of the distribution and frequency of possible relevant syntactic configurations of the protases of אִם conditionals in the Hebrew Bible is needed. For this purpose, the first formal pattern to distinguish is the distinction between protases that are initiated by *yiqṭol* and those that are initiated by *qaṭal* forms. Since some protases contain only one clause and others more than one clause, the second formal feature to distinguish is whether a protasis consists of one (Type 1) or more than one clause (Type 2)? This feature has been regarded as relevant, since a second or subsequent clause in a protasis has the potential to commence with a non-verbal constituent. A third formal feature, of which only the distribution has been explored, is how often apodoses with finite verbs are verb-initial or not—in other words, whether the apodosis has a fronted non-verbal constituent or not.

Since BH conditionals typically refer to something that has not yet happened, the overwhelming majority of the protases have a *yiqṭol* form of the verb. For this reason, I commence with אִם *yiqṭol* protases and then proceed to consider אִם *qaṭal* constructions. In each case, the secondary research question, namely, the function of fronting clauses not immediately following אִם in Type 2 constructions, is addressed (typically in footnotes). The results of this investigation and the frequency patterns are discussed in §1.0.

Although in the initial stages of the investigation, a distinction between of אִם X *yiqṭol* and of אִם X *qaṭal* constructions is made, and certain preliminary conclusions are formulated in §1.3, the differences between protases with *qaṭal* and *yiqṭol*

turned out to be of no significance for the role of fronting in the protases of conditionals. For this reason, in §2.0 the only formal feature of the protases to receive systematic consideration is whether the construction has a fronted non-verbal constituent or not.

## 1.0. Verb-initial protases

### 1.1. אִם *yiqṭol* (303x)

In a pilot study, it became apparent that protases that commence with infinitive absolute constructions have some unique features. For this reason, instances of Type 1 and Type 2 with an infinitive absolute construction are treated separately as Type 3.

#### 1.1.1. Type 1 V(X): *If A, then B* (190x)[3]

This instance of the category typically refers to a positive condition to be met by a (mainly[4]) discourse-active entity (1). This is by far the most frequently occurring pattern of use. Often a negative condition is involved (2). The protasis as a rule precedes the apodosis. However, the protasis also occasionally follows the apodosis. A positive (3) or negative condition (4) may be involved in the latter case.

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[3] In about 17 percent (32/190) of the cases, the apodosis has a fronted non-verbal constituent.

[4] For exceptions, cf. Amos 3.6a, 6b; 6.9; Ps. 7.13; Prov. 6.28; Job 14.14; Song 8.7; Eccl. 11.3ab.

(1) אִם־אֶמְצָא בִסְדֹם חֲמִשִּׁים צַדִּיקִם בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר וְנָשָׂאתִי לְכָל־הַמָּקוֹם בַּעֲבוּרָם
'If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.' (Gen. 18.26)[5]

(2) וְאִם־לֹא תֹאבֶה הָאִשָּׁה לָלֶכֶת אַחֲרֶיךָ וְנִקֵּיתָ מִשְּׁבֻעָתִי זֹאת
'But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine.' (Gen. 24.8)[6]

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[5] 98x: Gen. *13.16b*; 30.31; Exod. 12.4, 22.6b; 29.34 Lev. 2.14; 13.57; Num. *12.6b*; 22.18ab–b; 24.13; 36.4; Deut. *30.4*; Josh. 2.20; Judg. 4.8ab; 13.16aa, *ab–ac*; 15.7b; 16.7b; 21.21; 2 Sam. 10.11a; 15.25b, 1 Kgs 1.52ab–ac; 2.4b–c; 3.14; 12.27; 13.8ab–ac; 2 Kgs 2.10ba; 7.4aa, bb, bc; Isa. 1.*18ba*, *bb*; *10.22*; 21.12ba; 53.10ab–ab; Jer. 15.19ab (may also be Type 2); *22.24b–c*; *31.36*; *33.20ab–21a*; Hos. 9.12; Amos *3.6a*, *b*; 5.22; 6.9; *9.2a*, *2b*, *3a*, *3b*, *4*; Nah. 3.12; Hag. 2.13ab; Hab. 2.3ba; Pss 27.3a, *3a–b*; 50.12; 68.14; *132.12*; 137.5; Job 8.18; 9.3; *9.20a*; *14.7*, 14; 16.6a; 17.13; 22.23; 27.14; 31.13–14; 33.5; Prov. 1.10; 3.24a; 4.12b; *6.28*; 27.22; Song 5.8b; 8.7b; Ruth 3.13aa; 4.4ba, bb; Eccl. *4.10a*, 11, *12*; 8.17c; 10.11; *11.3aa*; Neh. *1.9b*; 2.5ab; 3.35; *13.21ab*; 1 Chron. 19.12; 28.9ba, bb; 2 Chron. 15.2cb, cc; 20.9. In Gen. 38.17 and Judg. 13bb the apodoses are elided.

[6] 37x: Gen. *4.7ab–ac*; 34.17; 44.23, 32b; Exod. 13.13ab; 22.7; 34.20ab; 40.37; Lev. 5.7, 11; 12.8; 25.54; 27.27b; Num. 19.12b; 32.23, 30; 33.55; Deut. 24.1; 25.7; 28.15, 58–59; Judg. 4.8b; 14.13; Isa. 7.9b; Jer. 12.17; *13.17*; 17.27; *22.5*; 26.4b–6; 38.18; Pss *7.13a*; 59.16b; Job *36.12*; Song 1.8; Ruth 3.13ab; 4.4bb.

(3) וְלֹא אֹסִיף לְהָנִיד רֶגֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לַאֲבוֹתָם רַק׀ אִם־
יִשְׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִים וּלְכָל־הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה אֹתָם עַבְדִּי מֹשֶׁה׃
'And I will not cause the feet of Israel to wander any more out of the land that I gave to their ancestors, if only they will be careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.' (2 Kgs 21.8b)[7]

(4) אֶת־שְׁנֵי בָנַי תָּמִית אִם־לֹא אֲבִיאֶנּוּ אֵלֶיךָ
'You may kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you.' (Gen. 42.37ab–ac)[8]

### 1.1.2. Type 2 V(X): *If A[1] and A[n], then B* (58x)[9]

The most frequent instances of this configuration are those where the protasis consists of more than one clause, but only the verb of the first clause is preceded by אִם (5). In a number of instances, a second clause and/or subsequent clauses of the protasis have a fronted constituent, i.e., X *yiqṭol* (6).

Although the majority of these instances refer to positive conditions, a few negative ones are also attested (7).[10] Typically, actions representing stages or different aspects of the same

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[7] 18x: Gen. 15.5; 18.28b, 30b; 34.15; 1 Sam. 25.22; 1 Kgs 8.25ab–bb; 20.10ab–b; 2 Kgs 18.23b; Isa. 36.8b; Jer. 2.28ab; Ps. 81.9; Prov. 1.10–14; *1 Chron. 22.13*; 28.7; 2 Chron. 6.16ab–bb; 30.9bb–bc; 33.8.

[8] 5x: Josh. 2.14; 7.12b; Prov. 4.16a, 16b. In Ps. 137.6a two separate conditions are referred to.

[9] In about 16 percent (9/58) of the cases, the apodosis has a fronted non-verbal constituent.

[10] In only one instance (Deut. 11.28) does the protasis follow the apodosis.

event[11] are predicated of discourse-active entities in categorical sentences. Relatively often, the apodosis entails more than one action.[12]

(5) אִם־תֹּאבוּ וּשְׁמַעְתֶּם טוּב הָאָרֶץ תֹּאכֵלוּ׃
'If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.' (Isa. 1.19)[13]

(6) וְאִם לֹא יְכַבְּס וּבְשָׂרוֹ לֹא יִרְחָץ וְנָשָׂא עֲוֹנוֹ
'But if they do not wash themselves or bathe *their body*, they shall bear their guilt.' (Lev. 17.16)[14]

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[11] Isa. 58.9–10 is an exception, where different actions required by the discourse-active entity are referred to.

[12] E.g., Lev. 13.53–54; 26.21–22; Deut. 19.8–9; 30.17–18; 1 Kgs 6.12–13; Isa. 58.13–14.

[13] 30x: Gen. 28.20b–22; 32.9; Lev. 13.21, 53–54; 14.43–44; 26.21–22; Num. 32.29; Deut. 19.8–9; 30.17–18; 1 Sam. 17.9a; 2 Sam. 11.20–21; 1 Kgs 6.12–13; 9.4–5; 11.38; *Isa. 1.20*; *58.13–14*; Jer. 2.22; 15.19aa (may also be Type 1); *37.10*; Job 11.10; *20*, *12–14*; 36.11; Eccl. *6.3*; 2 Chron. *6.22–23*, *24–25*; 7.19–20; 10.7. In 1 Sam. 12.14 the apodosis is elided. Job 31.5–40 requires further investigation.

[14] 10x: 1 Kgs 6.12–13; 9.4–5; Job *14.8–9*; 20.6–7; 31.7–8; 34.14–15; 2 Chron. 7.17–18. In Ps. 89.31–33 a second, third, and fourth clause have a fronted constituent. In each instance, alternative topics are selected. In Job 27.16–17 a different point of comparison is fronted. A feature shared by all these examples is that in the first clause (without a fronted constituent) a set of related topics is (potentially) triggered. In the subsequent clause(s) one (or more) of these accessible topics is (are) fronted. What is predicated about them is slightly different from, but closely related to, the predication in the first clause of the protasis, e.g., in (6) Lev 17.16aa, the predication is 'not wash', and in 16ab, it is 'not bathe'. In other words, these constructions may be explained by means of what Khan and Van der Merwe (2020, 370) refer to as "selecting a

(7) וְהָיָה֮ אִם־לֹ֣א יַאֲמִ֣ינוּ לָךְ֒ וְלֹ֣א יִשְׁמְע֗וּ לְקֹל֙ הָאֹ֣ת הָרִאשׁ֔וֹן וְהֶֽאֱמִ֖ינוּ לְקֹ֣ל הָאֹ֑ת הָאַחֲרֽוֹן׃

If they will not believe you or heed the first sign, they may believe the second sign (Exod. 4.8).[15]

In a few instances each clause of the protases is preceded by אִם (8). In these cases, it can be argued that events of relatively significant difference are involved.[16] In a few rare instances in the parallel lines of poetic texts, אִם is totally absent in the second protasis + apodosis pair (9).

(8) אִם־תְּעַנֶּ֣ה אֶת־בְּנֹתַ֔י וְאִם־תִּקַּ֥ח נָשִׁ֖ים עַל־בְּנֹתָ֑י אֵ֣ין אִ֔ישׁ עִמָּ֔נוּ רְאֵ֕ה אֱלֹהִ֖ים עֵ֥ד בֵּינִ֖י וּבֵינֶֽךָ׃

‘If you ill-treat my daughters, or if you take wives in addition to my daughters, though no one else is with us, remember that God is witness between you and me.’ (Gen. 31.50)[17]

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topic.” I will refer to this function of fronting in this paper as “selecting alternative topics.” See also Van der Merwe, Naudé and Kroeze (2017, 501).

[15] 6x: Exod. 4.9; Deut. 20.12; 1 Sam. 12.15. In Lev. 26.14–16, 26.15 specifies 26.14 with two אִם X *yiqṭol*s. In each instance alternative topics are selected. Cf. also (6).

[16] Obad. 1.4 is an exception.

[17] 8x: Num. 32.20–22; Mal. 2.2; Job 31.16–22 (in 20–21 *qaṭal*s follow אִם), 24–28 (in 24 a *qaṭal* follows אִם), 29–30. Prov. *2.1–5*. In Prov. 2.3, the second אִם is followed by an X *yiqṭol*. A similar construction occurs in Obad. *1.4aa*.

(9) אִם־אֶסַּק שָׁמַיִם שָׁם אָתָּה וְאַצִּיעָה שְׁאוֹל הִנֶּךָּ׃
'If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.' (Ps. 139.8)[18]

### 1.1.3. Type 3 V(X): V = Infinitive Absolute Construction (55x)[19]

A distinctive feature of this category is the use of an infinitive absolute construction in clause-initial position in the protasis.[20] These protases number 40x of Type 1 (10) and 13x of Type 2 (11).

(10) אִם־חָבֹל תַּחְבֹּל שַׂלְמַת רֵעֶךָ עַד־בֹּא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ תְּשִׁיבֶנּוּ לוֹ׃
'If ever you take your neighbour's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down.' (Exod. *22.25*)[21]

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[18] 4x: Job 9.20b; 16.6b; Prov. 3.24b.

[19] In about 9 percent (5/55) of the cases, the apodosis has a fronted non-verbal constituent.

[20] In two instances (Exod. 22.22 and Josh. 23.12–13), both protasis and apodosis are introduced by infinitive absolute constructions. In only one case (Song 8.7b), the apodosis alone is introduced with an infinitive absolute construction.

[21] 40x: Exod. 19.5; 21.5–6, 22.22; Lev. 7.18; 13.7, 22, 27, 19.7; 20.4–5; 27.10b, 31, 33b; Num. 21.2; *30.13*, *15*, 16; Deut. 11.13, 22; 28.1; Judg. 11.30b–31; 16.11ab–b; 1 Sam. 12.25; 20.6, 7b, 9, 21b; 2 Sam. 15.8b; 18.3; 1 Kgs 20.39bb–bc; 22.28ab–ac; Jer. 12.16; 17.24–25; 22.4; 38.17; 42.10; Est. 4.14. In Deut. 15.5 and Zech. 6.15b, the protasis follows the apodosis. See perhaps also Lam. 5.22.

(11) וְאִם שָׁכֹב יִשְׁכַּב אִישׁ אֹתָהּ וּתְהִי נִדָּתָהּ עָלָיו וְטָמֵא שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וְכָל־הַמִּשְׁכָּב
אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁכַּב עָלָיו יִטְמָא׃

'If it indeed/ever happens that any man lies with her, and her impurity falls on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.' (Lev. *15.24*)[22]

Crucial for purposes of this study is, first, that in (10)–(11) (and the cases listed in the footnotes) some action or event Y is predicated of a discourse-active entity X by means of a categorical sentence (or sentences). In nearly all instances, the factuality of the action or event is profiled.[23]

Second, only one instance of a protasis with an infinitive absolute construction and fronted non-verbal constituent is attested: (12). I have been unable to establish the function of this fronting.[24]

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[22] 13x: Exod. *15.26*; 23.22; Lev. 13.12–13, 35; 14.48; Num. 30.7–8; 35.26–27; Deut. 8.19; Josh. 23.12–13; Judg. 14.12; 1 Kgs 9.6; Jer. 7.5–7. Typically, protasis clauses that follow an initial clause introduced by an infinitive absolute construction are verb initial. Exod. 15.26 is an exception. Even more exceptional is Jer. 7.5–7: not only is the second clause of the apodosis also introduced by an infinitive absolute construction (as well as אִם), but the third, fourth, and fifth clauses have a fronted constituent—in each case alternative topics are selected to be commented upon.

[23] For a more detailed description of the semantic functions of the infinitive absolute construction, see Van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze (2017, 179–80). The function of the infinitive absolute construction in Lev. 14.48 is unclear.

[24] See also the major English translations, e.g., *ESV*, *CEB*, *NRSV*, and *NIV*, and commentaries on Jeremiah, e.g., Holladay (1989, 274), Allen

(12) וְעַתָּה לָכֵן שִׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה שְׁאֵרִית יְהוּדָה כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־אַתֶּם שׂוֹם תְּשִׂמְוּן פְּנֵיכֶם לָבֹא מִצְרַיִם וּבְאתֶם לָגוּר שָׁם׃

'Therefore hear the word of the LORD, O remnant of Judah. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: If *you* are determined to enter Egypt and go to settle there.' (Jer. 42.15)

Third, infinitive absolute constructions are attested only in protases with *yiqṭol* verbs.

## 1.2. אִם *Qaṭal* (77x)[25]

### 1.2.1. Type 1 V(X): *If A, then B* (53x)[26]

Instances of this category typically refer to a positive condition to be met by a (mainly[27]) discourse-active entity (13)–(15). This is, as in cases where אִם is followed by *yiqṭol*, by far the most frequently occurring pattern of use.[28] Sometimes a negative condition is involved (16). The protasis as a rule precedes the apodosis.

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(2008, 425), and Lundbom (2008, 11). Not one of these translators or commentaries appears to assign a function to the fronting.

[25] In about 8 percent (6/77) of the cases, the apodosis has a fronted nonverbal constituent.

[26] In about 8 percent (4/53) of the cases, the apodosis has a fronted nonverbal constituent.

[27] For an exception, cf. Ps. 41.7.

[28] In conditionals in the parallel lines of poetic texts, אִם is sometimes (3x) absent in the second protasis + apodosis pair (Job 10.15; 35.6; Prov. 9.12).

However, although rare, the protasis may also follow an apodosis (17).

(13) אִם־שָׁכַבְתִּי וְאָמַרְתִּי מָתַי אָקוּם
'When I lie down, I say, "When shall I rise?"' (Job 7.4)[29]

(14) וְאִם־עָמְדוּ בְּסוֹדִי וְיַשְׁמִעוּ דְבָרַי אֶת־עַמִּי
'But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people.' (Jer. 23.22)[30]

(15) וְהָיָה אִם־בָּא אֶל־אֵשֶׁת אָחִיו וְשִׁחֵת אַרְצָה לְבִלְתִּי נְתָן־זֶרַע לְאָחִיו׃
'So, whenever he went into his brother's wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother.' (Gen. 38.9 *ESV*)[31]

(16) וְהָיָה אִם־לֹא חָפַצְתְּ בָּהּ וְשִׁלַּחְתָּהּ לְנַפְשָׁהּ וּמָכֹר לֹא־תִמְכְּרֶנָּה בַּכָּסֶף
'But if you are not satisfied with her, you shall let her go free and not sell her for money.' (Exod. 21.14)[32]

(17) הָבוּ מִקְנֵיכֶם וְאֶתְּנָה לָכֶם בְּמִקְנֵיכֶם אִם־אָפֵס כָּסֶף
'Give me your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock, if your money is gone.' (Gen. 47.16).[33]

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[29] 18x: Exod. 22.2a; Num. 14.8, *30.5*; Isa. 28.25; Jer. 14.18aa, ab; Ezek. *43.11*; Pss *41.7*; 50.18; *94.18*; Job 21.6; 35.6, 7; Prov. 9.12; 23.15; 24.14; Lam. 3.32.

[30] 13x: Judg. 16.17b; 2 Sam. 15.33; 2 Kgs 7.4ab; Amos 7.2; Ps. 66.18; 73.15; Job 9.15; 10.14, 15; *31.21–22*, 33. In Jer. 15.1, the subjects are discourse inactive, but identifiable for the audience.

[31] 3x: Judg. 6.3; Ps. 78.34.

[32] 5x: Exod. 22.10ab; Lev. 25.28; Job 31.20, 31 (part of sequence of protases).

[33] 2x: Prov. 3.30, 30.

A number of instances of a fixed expression are attested (18). The latter constructions always appear in dialogue, where both interlocutors are discourse active. This fixed expression does not occur in texts that are typically associated with LBH.[34] Furthermore, it never occurs with a *yiqṭol* form of the verb.

(18) אִם־נָ֣א מָצָ֤אתִי חֵן֙ בְּעֵינֵיכֶ֔ם דַּבְּרוּ־נָ֣א בְאָזְנֵ֔י פַּרְעֹ֖ה לֵאמֹ֑ר:
'If now I have found favour with you, please speak to Pharaoh as follows:' (Gen. 50.4)[35]

### 1.2.2. Type 2 V(X): *If $A^1$ and $A^n$, then B* (24x)[36]

Like instances of this configuration with a *yiqṭol* verb, most frequent are instances where the protasis consists of more than one clause, but only the verb of the first clause is preceded by אִם (19). The overall majority are positive conditions.[37] In all these cases, typically, actions representing stages or different aspects of the same event are predicated of discourse-active entities in categorical sentences. In a few instances each clause in the protasis is preceded by אִם (20). However, the reason for the particle's repetition is unclear.

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[34] However, see (21) below.

[35] 10x: Gen. 18.3; 33.10; 47.29b; Exod. 33.13; Num. 11.15b; 32.5; Judg. 6.17; 1 Sam. 20.29ab–ac; 27.5. In Gen. 30.27, the apodosis has been elided.

[36] In about 8 percent (2/24) of the cases, the apodosis has a fronted nonverbal constituent.

[37] Gen. 43.9 and Lev. 5.28 are exceptions.

(19) וְהָיָה אִם־נָשַׁךְ הַנָּחָשׁ אֶת־אִישׁ וְהִבִּיט אֶל־נְחַשׁ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת וָחָי׃
‘When a snake bit someone, and he looked up to the snake, he would live.’ (Num. 21.9)[38]

(20) אִם־נָבַלְתָּ בְהִתְנַשֵּׂא וְאִם־זַמּוֹתָ יָד לְפֶה׃
‘If you have been foolish, exalting yourself, or if you have been devising evil, put your hand on your mouth.’ (Prov. 30.32)[39]

The fixed expression identified in (18), which is rare in LBH, is attested in Est. 5.8a (21) and 7.3a. It is significant, though, that in each of the latter two cases the former fixed expression is co-ordinated with a second fixed expression that seems to have replaced it in LBH.[40]

(21) אִם־מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב לְהָתֵן אֶת־שְׁאֵלָתִי וְלַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־בַּקָּשָׁתִי יָבוֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמָן אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה לָהֶם
‘If I have won the king’s favour, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfil my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet that I will prepare for them.’ (Est. 5.8a)

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[38] 17x: Gen. 47.6bb–bc; Num. 5.27, 28; 2 Kgs 7.4aa; Mic. 5.7b; Pss 7.5; 44.21; Job 9.16, *30–31*; 31.5–6, 9–10**;** Prov. 6.1–3. In Ps. 63.6–7, the protasis follows the apodosis of the condition. In Isa. 4.4–5, Job 9.24, and Eccl. *10.10* the second clause of the protases has a fronted constituent, in each case involving the selection of an alternative topic.

[39] Also Lev. 5.19 and Ps. 7.4–6.

[40] See Est. 3.9; 5.4ab–b; 9.13ab–b; Neh. 2.5a; 1 Chron. 13.2.

## 1.3. Preliminary Conclusions

The following statistical profile of the 380 verb-initial protases can now be perceived.

1. About 80 percent (303) of the protases have *yiqṭol* and 20 percent (77) have *qaṭal* verbs.
2. Of the instances with *yiqṭol* verbs, nearly 25 percent (71/303) are of Type 2. In the case of instances with *qaṭal* verbs, about 31 percent (24/77) are of Type 2.
3. About 13 percent (40/303) of the apodoses with a *yiqṭol* verb have a fronted non-verbal constituent. In the apodoses with *qaṭal* verbs, this configuration is substantially less frequent, viz. about 8 percent (6/77).
4. When the verb is used in an infinitive absolute construction, the finite verb is never a *qaṭal*, and in only one case does the infinitive absolute construction not initiate the clause. The apodoses have a fronted non-verbal constituent in less than 10 percent (5/55) of the instances.
5. In protases that consist of more than one clause (Type 2), 15 instances[41] were identified where some of the non-initial clauses have a fronted constituent. In each of these cases, the selection of an alternative topic can be postulated.
6. A distinction has also been made between positive and negative conditions. Instances where the protases followed the apodoses have also been considered separately.

[41] 12x with a *yiqṭol* as initial verb and 3x with a *qaṭal* as the initial verb.

None of these heuristic distinctions has revealed any significant semantic differences relevant to this study.

If we now turn to protases with אִם X *yiqṭol* and אִם X *qaṭal* configurations, we can focus on the possible function(s) of the fronting. We will not deal with the above-mentioned configurations separately.

## 2.0. אִם X Verb protases (96x)[42]

As indicated earlier, unlike in §1.0, the data are not discussed in this section in terms of Type 1 and Type 2 constructions. Of Type 2, 22 instances[43] were identified in אִם X verb protases.

When one considers the 96 instances of אִם X verb protases in the Hebrew Bible,[44] it is possible to postulate the following in the overwhelming majority (85/96, i.e., nearly 89 percent) of the cases: as far as a specific discourse-active event or situation is concerned,[45] the fronted constituent refers to one or another

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[42] In only about 7 percent (7/96) of the cases does the apodosis have a fronted non-verbal constituent.

[43] In Exod. 18.23; 22.1; Lev. 13.23, 28; 26.23–24; Num. 30.11–12; 35.16, 17; Deut. 20.11; 22.25; Judg. 6.3; 1 Sam. 17.9b; 2 Sam. 15.34; 1 Kgs 12.7; Job 19.5 the second and/or later clauses of the apodosis are verb-initial. In Lev. 13.37; 26.3; Num. 16.29; 35.20–21, 22–24; Judg. 9.16–18; and Job 31.39–40 some or all of the non-initial clauses also have a fronted constituent. In each case, the selection of an alternative topic can be postulated.

[44] Of these instances, 73 have אִם X *yiqṭol* and 23 אִם X *qaṭal*.

[45] In a few cases the discourse-active event has to be construed from context. See, for example, (37)–(40).

(non-verbal) aspect, for example, a person, thing, or circumstance of the discourse-active event or situation that can be construed as a selection from a set of more than one possible alternatives (or variables).

The closed set of alternatives may consist of only two members, as in (22) and (23). However, in a legal frame the set of alternatives is often more than two. In the case of (24), the rest of the closed set who may sin can be found in Lev. 4.13 (the congregation of Israel) and 4.27 (an individual member of the Israelite community).

(22) אִם־יוּכַל לְהִלָּחֶם אִתִּי וְהִכָּנִי וְהָיִינוּ לָכֶם לַעֲבָדִים וְאִם־אֲנִי אוּכַל־לוֹ וְהִכִּיתִּיו וְהְיִיתֶם לָנוּ לַעֲבָדִים וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֹתָנוּ׃

‘If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if *I* prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.’ (1 Sam. 17.9)[46]

(23) וְאִם־מִזְבַּח אֲבָנִים תַּעֲשֶׂה־לִּי לֹא־תִבְנֶה אֶתְהֶן גָּזִית

‘But if you make for me *an altar of stone*, do not build it of hewn stones.’ (Exod. 20.25)[47]

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[46] 7x: 2 Sam. 10.11b || 1 Chron. 19.12b; 1 Kgs 1.52b. See also 1 Sam. 26.19ba–bb and Job 8.4, 5–6.

[47] 4x: see also Lev. 4.32; 12.5; 27.22–23 and *Job 31.39–40*.

(24) אִם הַכֹּהֵן הַמָּשִׁיחַ יֶחֱטָא לְאַשְׁמַת הָעָם וְהִקְרִיב עַל חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא פַּר בֶּן־בָּקָר תָּמִים לַיהוָה לְחַטָּאת׃

‘If it is *the anointed priest* who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, he shall offer for the sin that he has committed a bull of the herd without blemish as a sin offering to the LORD.’ (Lev. 4.3)[48]

Although at first glance “alternative topics” appear to be selected, as I mentioned earlier in this paper, (22)–(24), like (25)–(40), do not meet the criteria for “the selection of a topic” in a context where “the fronted constituent and the following predication contain a focus” (Khan and Van der Merwe 2020, 370). The alternative(s) that are selected occur in a context “where the speaker/writer informs the reader of a variable in a presupposition in the common ground.” In the case of (23), altars to be built are involved, the alternative variable is the type of altar. In the case of (24), what must be done to people who are sinning is at stake, the alternative variable is the identity of the group of people who have sinned. In terms of Khan and Van der Merwe’s (2020, 366) types of focus, these cases could be labelled as a type of selective focus. Not all are like (22), i.e., prototypical instances of selective focus, since a prototypical instance of this category “involves specifying a member of a presupposed set of possible specific alternatives as the variable within a proposition in the common ground” (Khan and Van der Merwe 2019, 366). In (23) and (24) the member(s) selected do not exclude or contrast with other variables, but present each as a possible alternative.

[48] 12x: see also Exod. 21.4, *9*, *10*, 27, *32*; Lev. 4.13, 27; Num. 15.27. Outside a legal frame, see Jer. 49.9a; Obad. 1.5 and Zech. 14.18.

Furthermore, selecting topic constructions are typically associated with things and living entities. However, in אִם X verb constructions in protases, the Xs are circumstantial, for example, spatial (25), temporal (26), or modal (27) in nature. The alternative purpose of an event may also be involved (28), as well as what was said in a situation (29). In (30), only the cataphoric reference to the alternative content is fronted.

(25) וְאִם־בַּשָּׂדֶה יִמְצָא הָאִישׁ אֶת־הַנַּעַר הַמְאֹרָשָׂה וְהֶחֱזִיק־בָּהּ הָאִישׁ וְשָׁכַב עִמָּהּ
וּמֵת הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־שָׁכַב עִמָּהּ לְבַדּוֹ׃
'But if the man meets the engaged woman *in the open country*, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die.' (Deut. 22.25)[49]

(26) אִם־בַּמַּחְתֶּרֶת יִמָּצֵא הַגַּנָּב וְהֻכָּה וָמֵת אֵין לוֹ דָּמִים
'If the thief is caught *while breaking in* and is beaten and dies, the one who killed him won't be guilty of bloodshed.' (Exod. 22.1)[50]

(27) אִם־בְּגַפּוֹ יָבֹא בְּגַפּוֹ יֵצֵא
'If he comes in *single*, he shall go out single.' (Exod. 21.3).[51]

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[49] 8x: Lev. 6.21b; Num. 13.23, 28, 41; 30.11–12; 2 Sam. 15.34; 17.13.

[50] 6x: Num. 30.9; 1 Kgs 12.7. In Exod. 21.21; Lev. 25.52; and Eccl. *11.8* the temporal adjunct that is fronted refers to duration.

[51] 14x: Lev. 7.12; Num. 10.4; 15.24; 16.29; 35.16, 17, 20–21, 22–24; and Judg. 9.16–18 (3x), 19.

(28) וַיֹּאמֶר אִם־לְשָׁלוֹם יָצָאוּ תִּפְשׂוּם חַיִּים וְאִם לְמִלְחָמָה יָצָאוּ חַיִּים תִּפְשׂוּם׃
'He said, "If they have come out *for peace*, take them alive; if they have come out *for war*, take them *alive*."' (1 Kgs 20.18).[52]

(29) וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁלוֹם תַּעֲנְךָ וּפָתְחָה לָךְ וְהָיָה כָּל־הָעָם הַנִּמְצָא־בָּהּ יִהְיוּ לְךָ לָמַס וַעֲבָדוּךָ
'If they answer you, *"Peace"* and open their gates, then all the people in it shall serve you at forced labour."' (Deut. 20.11).[53]

(30) אִם־כֹּה יֹאמַר נְקֻדִּים יִהְיֶה שְׂכָרֶךָ וְיָלְדוּ כָל־הַצֹּאן נְקֻדִּים וְאִם־כֹּה יֹאמַר עֲקֻדִּים יִהְיֶה שְׂכָרֶךָ וְיָלְדוּ כָל־הַצֹּאן עֲקֻדִּים׃
'If he said *thus*, "*The speckled* shall be your wages," then all the flock bore speckled; and if he said *thus*, "*The striped* shall be your wages," then all the flock bore striped." (Gen. 31.8).[54]

In most of the cases listed in (24)–(30), the set of alternatives is closed, or can be construed as a closed set of possible alternatives. Each of them can also be labelled as a type of 'selective' focus.

In a few instances, the narrow focus involved could be regarded as a restrictive focus (31)–(33), since it "selects the only possible candidate from the supposed open set" (Khan and Van der Merwe 2020, 366).

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[52] 1 Chron. 12.18bb (2x).

[53] 4x: Prov. 2.3 (part of 2.1–5). In Jer. 5.2, the content of what is said represents an extreme alternative, namely, a solemn oath. In other words, "Even if they say, 'as surely as the LORD lives,' they still swear falsely." See also Jer. 23.38.

[54] 7x: 1 Sam. 14.9, 10; 20.7a, 22; 2 Sam. 15.26.

(31) אִם־יְהוָה׀ לֹא־יִבְנֶ֣ה בַ֭יִת שָׁוְא׀ עָמְל֣וּ בוֹנָ֑יו בּ֝֗וֹ אִם־יְהוָ֥ה לֹא־יִשְׁמָר־עִ֥יר שָׁ֝וְא׀ שָׁקַ֗ד שׁוֹמֵֽר

‘Unless *the* LORD builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless *the* LORD guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain.’ (Ps. *127.1*)[55]

(32) וְאִם־שְׁלֹ֣שׁ־אֵ֔לֶּה לֹ֥א יַעֲשֶׂ֖ה לָ֑הּ וְיָצְאָ֥ה חִנָּ֛ם אֵ֥ין כָּֽסֶף

‘And if he does not do *these three things* for her, she shall go out without debt, without payment of money.’ (Exod. 21.11)

(33) וַיֹּ֣אמֶר הַכֹּהֵ֗ן חֶ֣רֶב׀ גָּלְיָ֣ת הַפְּלִשְׁתִּ֗י אֲשֶׁ֤ר־הִכִּ֙יתָ֙׀ בְּעֵ֣מֶק הָאֵלָ֔ה הִנֵּה־הִ֥יא לוּטָ֖ה בַּשִּׂמְלָ֑ה אַחֲרֵ֣י הָאֵפוֹד֮ אִם־אֹתָ֣הּ תִּקַּ֣ח־לְךָ֒ קַ֚ח כִּ֣י אֵ֣ין אַחֶ֔רֶת זוּלָתָ֖הּ בָּזֶ֑ה

‘The priest said, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you will take *that*, take it, for there is none here except that one.”’ (1 Sam. 21.10).[56]

In a few instances it is not immediately obvious whether restrictive narrow focus should be postulated, or rather a selection from a set of alternative topic-like entities.[57] In (34), for example,

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[55] See also Exod. 18.23. In the case of Num. 22.20b, reference is made to the exclusive reason for someone coming to the addressee, i.e., “If the sole reason for the men was coming to summon you, then….”

[56] In Lev. 26.18, 23–24, and 27 reference is made via a fronted cataphoric pronoun to extreme measures God took to persuade his people.

[57] In Num. 20.17 Moses asks the Edomites to allow the Israelites to pass through their land and promises that they will not pass through any field or drink of the water from their wells. The Edomites refuse their request. The Israelites then come up with a more realistic promise in v. 19: בַּמְסִלָּה נַעֲלֶה֙ וְאִם־מֵימֶ֣יךָ נִשְׁתֶּ֔ה אֲנִ֥י וּמִקְנָ֖י וְנָתַתִּ֣י מִכְרָ֑ם ‘Only on the highway we will keep, and if we drink *your water*, we or our livestock, we will pay you its price.’ It is possible to argue that the Edomites refuse to

which is very similar to (6), it appears as if a series of alternative topics are selected. However, it can also be argued that the condition is that exclusively the Lord's statutes and commands must be kept, like his Sabbaths—not those of the idols (Lev. 26.1). Although not so evident as in (34), but nevertheless possible, it is reasonable to regard (35) as a similar instance of restrictive focus. A formal feature that is shared by (31), (34), and (35) is that אִם is repeated before each clause in the protasis [58]

(34) אִם־בְּחֻקֹּתַי תֵּלֵכוּ וְאֶת־מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם׃
'If you follow *my statutes* and keep *my commandments* and observe them faithfully, ….' (Lev. 26.3)

(35) כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אִם־בִּדְרָכַי תֵּלֵךְ וְאִם אֶת־מִשְׁמַרְתִּי תִשְׁמֹר וְגַם־אַתָּה תָּדִין אֶת־בֵּיתִי וְגַם תִּשְׁמֹר אֶת־חֲצֵרָי
'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "If you will walk *in my ways* and if you keep *my requirements*, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts."' (Zech. 3.7)

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comply out of fear that the Israelites and their livestock would eat from their land and drink from their wells. In their reply, the Israelites acknowledge by implication that it would be hard to pass through a land without drinking water. Between the alternatives, food and water, one, i.e., water, is selected for comment. However, it can also be argued, that the Israelites first committed themselves to travel '*only* on the highway', and then pledge 'if any whatsoever of the Edomites' water' is drunk by them or livestock, they will pay for it. In the latter instance a type of restrictive focus or perhaps even scalar focus (Khan and Van der Merwe 2020, 378–79) could be postulated.'

[58] Ps. 89.31–32 is not easy to explain. Its repetition of אִם is not exactly the same as in (31), (34), and (35).

Instances of fronting where the verb of a protasis is הָיָה are rare. In (36), an instance of narrow restrictive constituent focus can be postulated. The condition is: "If this matter has been from the king, and nobody else, then…"

(36) אִם מֵאֵת אֲדֹנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ נִהְיָה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְלֹא הוֹדַעְתָּ אֶת־עַבְדֶּיךָ
"If this matter has been *from my lord the king*, you did not make it known to your servant" (1 Kgs 1.27).[59]

In a few cases, the function of the fronted constituent most probably is indeed that of narrow selective focus. However, the discourse-active predication and other possible variables have to be construed from the preceding context. In (37), it can be argued that God may cause disaster to strike someone so that he/she dies (Job 9; 13; 17). However, in verse 23, it is the alternative of an instance where a disaster (and not God) causes someone's death. In (38), it may be argued that "money" and not something else, for example, an animal (verse 13), is lent to God's people. In (39), it might be argued that the role of God as creator of the normal order of things is discourse active. The narrow selective focus of the protasis is that "if it is *something new* that God created." In (40), a "ransom" can be construed as an alternative "punishment" to that of the death penalty that is imposed on the guilty party referred to in Exod. 21.29.

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[59] In two other instances with הָיָה, alternatives can be postulated. In Exod. 21.23, it is a serious injury as alternative to a less serious one; and in Deut. 22.20, it is when a claim is true, as alternative to a false claim. Each case represents an instance of selective narrow focus.

(37) אִם־שׁוֹט יָמֵית פִּתְאֹם לְמַסַּת נְקִיִּם יִלְעָג

‘When *disaster* brings sudden death, he mocks at the calamity of the innocent.’ (Job 9.23)

(38) אִם־כֶּסֶף | תַּלְוֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־הֶעָנִי עִמָּךְ לֹא־תִהְיֶה לוֹ כְּנֹשֶׁה לֹא־תְשִׂימוּן עָלָיו נֶשֶׁךְ׃

‘If you lend *money* to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them.’ (Exod. 22.24)

(39) וְאִם־בְּרִיאָה יִבְרָא יְהוָה וּפָצְתָה הָאֲדָמָה אֶת־פִּיהָ וּבָלְעָה אֹתָם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם וְיָרְדוּ חַיִּים שְׁאֹלָה וִידַעְתֶּם כִּי נִאֲצוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה אֶת־יְהוָה׃

‘But if the LORD creates *something new*, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up, with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the LORD.’ (Num. 16.30)

(40) אִם־כֹּפֶר יוּשַׁת עָלָיו וְנָתַן פִּדְיֹן נַפְשׁוֹ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יוּשַׁת עָלָיו׃

‘If *a ransom* is imposed on the owner, then the owner shall pay whatever is imposed for the redemption of the victim’s life.’ (Exod. 21.30)

In (41)–(44), like in (12), I have failed to identify any possible alternative variables to construe.

(41) וְאִם־בְּעֵינָיו עָמַד הַנֶּתֶק וְשֵׂעָר שָׁחֹר צָמַח־בּוֹ נִרְפָּא הַנֶּתֶק טָהֹר הוּא

‘But if *in his eyes* the itch is checked, and black hair has grown in it, the itch is healed, he is clean.’ (Lev. 13.37)[60]

[60] See also Job 19.5.

(42) אִם־רֽוּחַ הַמּוֹשֵׁל֙ תַּעֲלֶ֣ה עָלֶ֔יךָ מְקוֹמְךָ֖ אַל־תַּנַּ֑ח
‘If *the anger of the ruler* rises against you, do not leave your post.’ (Eccl. 10.4)[61]

(43) אִם־עֲוֹנ֥וֹת תִּשְׁמָ֗ר־יָ֫הּ אֲדֹנָ֥י מִֽי־יַעֲמֹֽד׃
‘If you, O Lord, should mark *iniquities*, Lord, who could stand?’ (Ps. 130.3)[62]

(44) הִנֵּ֣ה אָנֹכִ֗י מַצִּ֤יג אֶת־גִּזַּת֙ הַצֶּ֔מֶר בַּגֹּ֖רֶן אִ֣ם טַ֣ל יִֽהְיֶ֗ה עַל־הַגִּזָּה֙ לְבַדָּ֔הּ וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָ֖רֶץ חֹ֣רֶב וְיָדַ֣עְתִּי כִּֽי־תוֹשִׁ֗יעַ בְּיָדִי֙ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל
‘Look, I am going to lay a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is *dew* on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will deliver Israel by my hand.’ (Judg. 6.37b)

In one case, the protasis with a fronted constituent follows the apodosis (45). In this case, it is also not possible to postulate a set of alternatives from which the fronted subject could have been selected.[63]

(45) וְכֹ֛ל אֲשֶׁ֥ר יִֽהְיֶ֖ה אִתְּךָ֣ בַּבַּ֑יִת דָּמ֣וֹ בְרֹאשֵׁ֔נוּ אִם־יָ֥ד תִּֽהְיֶה־בּ֖וֹ׃
‘…their blood will be on our head if *a hand* is laid on them.’ (Josh. 2.19)

What is significant about some these ‘problematic’ cases is that the fronted constituent is indefinite, for example (37)–(40) and

[61] Also Eccl. 5.7.

[62] See also Jer. 14.7 and Job 34.32.

[63] One of the reviewers suggested that one could postulate an instance of scalar narrow focus, in other words, ‘if *even* a hand is laid on them’. It is indeed possible. For the notion ‘scalar focus’, see Khan and Van der Merwe (2020, 369).

(43)–(45). In the case of (44), like in Judg. 4.20, the indefinite subject may suggest the presence of a thetic sentence.[64]

## 3.0. Conclusions

This exploratory study has a limited scope. It focuses on the function of the fronting in 399 verbal sentences in the protases of conditional clauses that are introduced by אִם. Given the nature of conditional clauses as setting up one or more alternative mental spaces, the study addresses the question of whether one should expect that the fronting of a non-verbal constituent prototypically functions as a type of narrow focus rather than to select alternative topics or mark a thetic sentence in the protases of conditionals.[65] It has been established that this is indeed the case. In 76 percent (73/96)[66] of the cases of fronting, it can be argued

[64] "In such constructions the whole sentence is in broad focus with no presuppositional component. They involve only one domain of focus. They present the proposition of the clause as a unitary situation. The fronted items do not serve as the base of predication about which a predication is made" (Khan and Van der Merwe 2020, 378–79).

[65] According to Atkinson (2021, 189), the fronting of 964 verbal clauses in Samuel–Kings can be explained in 32.5 percent of the cases as topic selection/shift, in 35 percent as a type of narrow focus, and in 32.5 percent as thetic sentences.

[66] In 24 percent (96 of the 399) of the verbal apodoses in our corpus, a non-verbal constituent is fronted. In comparison with the 14 percent in narrative material and 34 percent in poetic material as established by Lunn (2006, 276–78), the 24 percent of the instances of fronting in apodoses occupy an in-between position. Fronting in the protasis of conditionals also occurs significantly more frequently than in the apodosis, namely, 13 percent versus 24 percent.

that a type of selective narrow focus is involved and in 12.5 percent (12/96) cases restrictive narrow focus. In cases where not the first, but a second or/and third clause of a protasis has a fronted constituent, it can be argued, almost as a rule, that an alternative topic has been selected.

In 11.5 percent (11/96) of the cases, it has not been possible to construe the selection of any alternative. In only two of these instances, it is possible that thetic sentences are involved.

A secondary research question, which was only partially investigated, is that of the distribution of verbal clauses with fronting in the apodoses of the conditionals in our corpus. It was established that with אִם *yiqṭol* constructions, on average about 13 percent of the cases, the apodosis has a fronted non-verbal constituent. By contrast, a lower occurrence of fronting (8 percent) is attested in אִם *qaṭal* constructions as well as אִם X verb constructions.

Apart from establishing the functions of fronting in the above-mentioned apodoses, a number of parameters have not been taken into account in this exploratory study. These include, for example, the relevance of the diachronic layers of BH, the literary genres of the texts, and any distinctions between content, generic, speech act, and epistemic conditions (cf. Bivin 2017).

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# CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE DESIGN OF DEPENDENCY TREEBANKS FOR LINGUISTIC RESEARCH IN BIBLICAL HEBREW*

*Robert S. D. Crellin*

Geoffrey Khan's contributions to the linguistic study of Biblical Hebrew (BH) have been wide ranging. As a brief glance at his recent bibliography shows, his interests span the full range of the linguistic study of the language, for instance:

* The present contribution was completed as part of ongoing research on the CROSSREADS project. CROSSREADS has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement no. 885040). Syntax trees were drawn using software written by the present author in Python. The software converts the XML of these tree-banks into DOT (see https://graphviz.org/doc/info/lang.html). The resulting DOT file is compiled to PNG format using the Graphviz compiler in Dependency2Tree (https://github.com/boberle/dependency2tree/, last commit 2020) and Graphviz (https://graphviz.org/). I would like to record my gratitude to the editors and to the anonymous reviewers for their comments and advice, which has certainly improved this paper. In addition, I wish to thank Daniel Swanson for kindly sharing an advance copy of Swanson and Tyers (2022).

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- Phonology (Khan 2020a; 2020b)
- Morphology (Khan 2013)
- Syntax (Khan 2019)
- Information structure (Khan 2019)

These topics are addressed not only in their own terms, but also together, in terms of the relationship between them, for instance:

- Phonology and morphology (Khan 2013)
- Morphology and information structure (Khan 2021)
- Syntax and information structure (Khan 2019)

The present chapter is inspired by Geoffrey Khan's multistratal engagement with BH to consider how recent advances in treebanking can help us better understand BH in the future.

Although treebanking efforts in ancient (and of course modern) languages are accelerating apace, there has been relatively little evaluation of the different principles and frameworks it is possible to adopt. It is relatively rare for treebank authors to provide in-depth discussion of the reasons for choosing a particular formalism. I could find no overt discussion of the rationale for choosing AGLDT (= Prague) in Vierros (2018) for PapyGreek, in Gorman (2020) for the Gorman treebanks, and in Keersmaekers et al. (2019) for the Pedalion trees; or for choosing Universal Dependencies in Zeldes and Abrams (2018), Luukko et al. (2020), and Swanson and Tyers (2022). Unusual, therefore, are Haug and Jøhndal (2008) and Bamman and Crane (2006), who provide detailed reasoning for the design of the PROIEL and ALDT annotation schemes, respectively. The lack of explanation or discussion of this kind is particularly conspicuous in the case

of treebanks that adopt Universal Dependencies (e.g., Zeldes and Abrams 2018; Luukko et al. 2020; Swanson and Tyers 2022), in light of criticism that the Universal Dependencies formalism has received (see below).

The present contribution aims to address this lack, at least in the context of ancient languages, and BH in particular. Special attention is paid to Universal Dependencies. This is in light of the facts both that it is fast becoming a *de facto* standard for the creation of dependency treebanks and that it has received considerable criticism regarding its design in linguistic terms.

The contribution has been written in the context of constructing a treebank, for the corpus of ancient inscriptions from ancient Sicily (Prag 2022). This corpus primarily comprises inscriptions written in Greek and Latin. However, a small subset are written in other languages, including the Semitic languages Punic and Hebrew. As such, the treebank is multilingual.

The contribution is written for anyone considering constructing a treebank for linguistic research, to bring together some of the general issues that need to be addressed in any treebanking project.

## 1.0. Importance of Corpora for the Study of Ancient Languages

Since for historical languages, like BH, our only recourse is to written records, the linguistic study of these languages is inherently reliant on corpora (Haug 2015, 187). Crucially, unlike living languages, there is no native speaker intuition to guide un-

derstanding of the underlying structure of the languages in question (Haug 2015, 187). Our understanding of these languages is therefore reliant on two sources: the original documents themselves and language theory (Haug 2015, 187).

## 2.0. Treebanks

A powerful way to bring together a given corpus with our general understanding of how languages work is to compile "structured corpora that are annotated for the assumptions that go into the research based on them" (Haug 2015, 192). Such corpora are often referred to by the term TREEBANK.

The last twenty years have seen a blossoming of such treebanked corpora of the world's languages. These vary in what they cover. Most consist of morphological and syntactic layers. It is the tree-like representation of syntactic and semantic structures that gave rise to the term TREEBANK (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treebank).

Additional layers are often included. For example, the Prague Dependency Treebank (Prague Dependency Treebank) includes a TECTOGRAMMATICAL layer, which brings together syntactic, semantic, and information structural features (Hajič et al. 2017, 563). Pragmatic Resources for Old Indo-European Languages (PROIEL) includes a layer describing information structure (Haug, Eckhoff, and Welo 2014).

## 2.1. Treebanks of Historical Languages

### 2.1.1. Syntactic Treebanking of Ancient Languages

In earlier years treebanks often used phrase structure grammars, e.g., the Penn Treebank (see Marcus, Santorini, and Marcinkiewicz 1994). With the growth of Natural Language Processing applications, including machine translation and question answering, (typed) dependency grammars have been preferred in recent years. Part of the reason for this is that in typed dependency grammars, the grammatical relations between elements (usually words, i.e., units demarcated by spaces) are directly specified, rendering computation of the relationship more straightforward. By contrast, in Phrase Structure Grammars this information must be derived from the structure as a whole, or specified separately (see further de Marneffe, MacCartney, and Manning 2006).

### 2.1.2. Phrase Structure Grammar Treebanks

Two Phrase Structure Grammar treebanks for ancient languages known to the present author are both for BH:[1]

[1] An anonymous reviewer suggested the inclusion of *Biblical Hebrew Grammar Visualised* (Andersen and Forbes 2012). For the assertion that the grammars are phrase structure grammars, see p. 6. The reviewer also pointed out that "Holmstedt's and Andersen and Forbes' databases of BH, which are those used within the standard BH software programmes (Accordance  Logos)." These are to my knowledge not Open Access databases; I, unfortunately, do not have access to them, and cannot bring them into the discussion.

- the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia Amstelodamensis (BHSA), is provided by the Eep Talstra Centre for Bible and Computer (ETCBC; see https://github.com/ETCBC/bhsa), and is encoded in the Text-Fabric format (see https://github.com/annotation/text-fabric; see further Kingham and Van Peursen 2018).
- Clear Bible Macula Phrase Structure Grammar trees (see https://github.com/Clear-Bible/macula-hebrew).

### 2.1.3. Dependency Grammar Treebanks

Dependency treebanks have been built or proposed for the following old Semitic languages:

- Qurʾanic Arabic (QADT) (Dukes, Atwell and Sharaf 2010, using traditional Arabic grammar, إعراب);
- Akkadian (Luukko et al. 2020, using Universal Dependencies);
- Ancient Hebrew-PTNK (Swanson and Tyers 2022, using Universal Dependencies);
- Ugaritic (Zemánek 2007, using Prague Dependencies).

Apart from Swanson and Tyers' treebank (discussed below), the Ugaritic Treebank (Zemánek 2007) is of particular relevance for the present study, given the structural similarities of Ugaritic and Hebrew. Unfortunately, however, it appears to have been developed no further than the pilot stage.

Old Indo-European languages have also seen intensive treebanking efforts:

- Ancient Greek and Latin Dependency Treebank (AGLDT, Celano, Crane, and Almas 2014);

- Pragmatic Resources in Old Indo-European languages (PROIEL, Haug and Jøhndal 2008);
- PapyGreek (Vierros and Henriksson 2021);
- Corpus of the Epigraphy of the Italian Peninsula in the 1st Millennium BCE (CEIPoM, Pitts 2022);
- Pedalion treebanks (Keersmaekers et al. 2019);
- Gorman treebanks (Gorman 2020).

All but PROIEL use the AGLDT flavour of the Prague dependency formalism (Bamman and Crane 2006; Bamman and Crane 2011). PROIEL uses its own formalism, described in Haug and Jøhndal (2008), Haug et al. (2009), and Haug (2010).

In contrast to their Phrase Structure Grammar counterparts, efforts to build dependency treebanks of BH are in their infancy. Swanson and Tyers (2022) describe the initial construction of a syntax treebank for ancient Hebrew following the Universal Dependencies formalism. To my knowledge this is the only dependency treebank currently available for ancient Hebrew. However, Swanson and Tyers (2022) do not discuss explicitly their reasons for choosing Universal Dependencies over other Dependency Grammar formalisms.

In the present survey I focus on Dependency Grammar treebanks for two reasons: (1) this is the most active area of development for treebanks of historical languages, generally; (2) relatively little work has been done to develop Dependency Grammar treebanks of BH. These two reasons combined make it a good moment to survey the field and glean what might be useful for the development of Dependency Grammar treebanks for BH.

### 2.2. Designing a Treebank of Biblical Hebrew: Design Criteria

The design of a BH treebank will be affected by the primary applications of the project. In what follows we will see several examples of how this kind of consideration might play out in the design of a BH treebank.

It is possible to conceive of a wide range of possible applications for a treebank of BH: from automatically generating first drafts of Bible translations into a new language, to linguistic research into the distribution of particular syntactic phenomena. I will argue that a particular application (whether machine translation or linguistic research) is likely to benefit most from a treebank designed with this application in mind.

## 3.0. Dependency Grammar

### 3.1. Relatedness

Although elements of Dependency Grammar have been seen in the work of earlier scholars (see Kahane and Osborne 2015, xxx) and even in the Arabic grammatical tradition (Dukes, Atwell, and Sharaf 2010, 1822, with references), modern Dependency Grammar is generally seen as having its origin with Lucien Tesnière (Tesnière 1959, translated into English in Tesnière 2015).

The fundamental insight of Dependency Grammar is that "particular occurrences of minimal units are directly related to one another" (Hays 1964, 511). Tesnière (2015, §3) puts the matter as follows:

> Each word in a sentence is not isolated as it is in the dictionary. The mind perceives **connections** between a word and its neighbours. The totality of these connections forms the scaffold of the sentence. (bold type original)

Tesnière does not define exactly what is meant by the notion of 'dependency'. This is to say, he does not "produce a falsifiable definition" of the term (Kahane and Osborne 2015, lxi). Perhaps in consequence of this ambiguity, Dependency Grammar formalisms have interpreted the notion of dependency in different ways. The three key formalisms for our purposes are:

- Prague Dependencies
- Pragmatic Resources in Old Indo-European Languages (PROIEL)
- Universal Dependencies

It is beyond the scope of this brief article to elaborate on the detailed differences between these formalisms. I will instead focus on one key difference, which is the different interpretations of the notions of dependency that they embody:

1. Dependency as a representation of surface syntactic relations (Prague Dependencies analytical layer; PROIEL syntactic layer);
2. Dependency as a representation of syntax-semantic relations (Prague Dependencies tectogrammatical layer; Universal Dependencies).

To illustrate how this works in practice, let us consider the treatment of definite direct objects in בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם (Gen. 1.1), in which אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם is a definite direct object headed by the

particle אֵת.[2] A surface-syntactic analysis (Figure 1, facing page) differs from a syntax-semantic one (Figure 2, facing page) in that the syntax-semantic analysis prioritises the semantic relationship of the verb (בָּרָא) and the direct object (הַשָּׁמַיִם), but minimises the structural feature that this relationship is mediated by a particle (אֵת).[3] The surface-syntactic analysis, by contrast, prioritises the relatedness of the verb (בָּרָא) and the particle אֵת which heads the direct object phrase.

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[2] The labels used in the examples provided in this section are taken from Universal Dependencies. The rules for structuring the relations do not always follow those of Universal Dependencies, for purposes of showing the different structuring rules that the respective surface-syntactic and syntax-semantic analyses imply. Trees that follow Universal Dependencies are labelled 'Universal Dependencies', while those which have been modified are labelled 'modified Universal Dependencies'. 'Modified Universal Dependencies' is an adaptation purely for the present context to illustrate the difference between surface-semantic and syntax-semantic representations.

[3] The Hebrew text of Gen. 1.1, Gen. 1.11, and Gen. 1.20 used in this section was sourced from the Unicode/XML Leningrad Codex, version UXLC 1.9, https://tanach.us. For version history, see https://www.tanach.us/Pages/Supplements.html.

Figure 1: Surface-syntactic dependency analysis of בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם

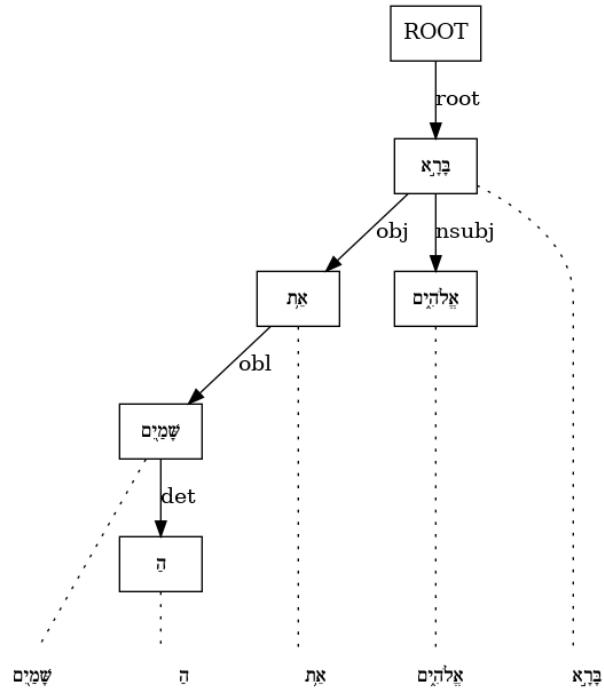
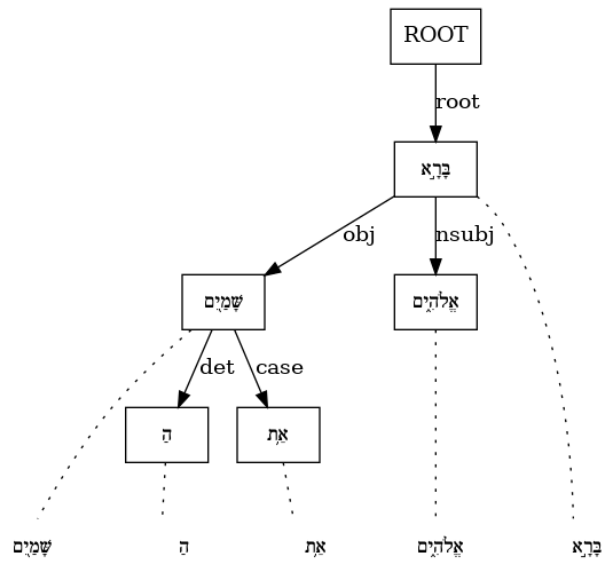



Figure 2: Syntax-semantic dependency analysis of בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם



The syntax-semantic analysis of בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם (Figure 2) captures well its structural similarity in semantic terms to examples involving indefinite direct objects, e.g., תַּדְשֵׁא הָאָרֶץ דֶּשֶׁא עֵשֶׂב (Gen. 1.11; Figure 3): in both cases the direct object participant is directly dependent on the main verb. By contrast, the surface-syntactic analysis (Figure 1) captures the structural similarity between בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם and sentences with prepositional phrase verbal complements e.g., וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֵף עַל־הָאָרֶץ (Gen. 1.20; Figure 4, facing page): in both cases the main verb heads a particle mediating the relationship with the nominal, but the similarity with sentences involving indefinite direct objects (Figure 2) is much less obvious.

Figure 3: Surface-syntactic dependency analysis of תַּדְשֵׁא הָאָרֶץ דֶּשֶׁא עֵשֶׂב

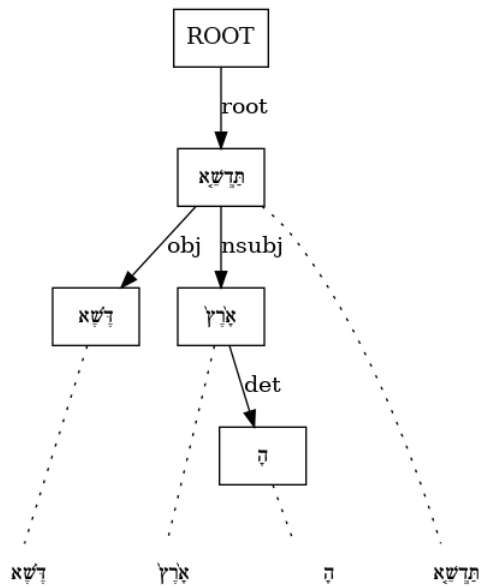
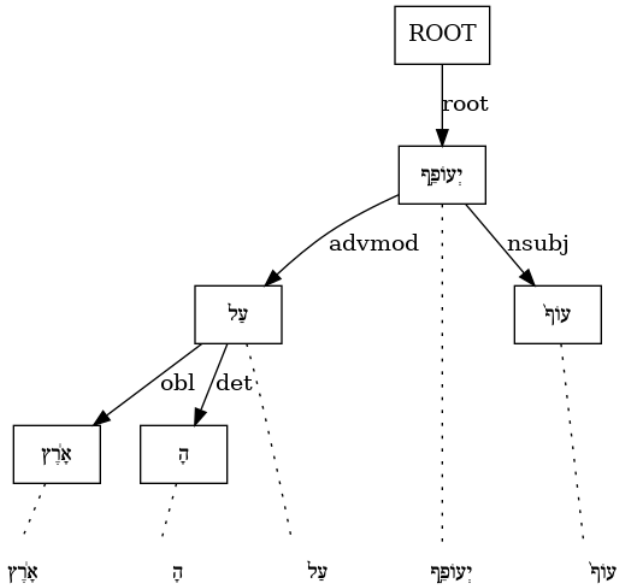


Figure 4: Surface-syntactic dependency analysis of וְעוֹד יְעוֹפֵף עַל־הָאָרֶץ




## 3.2. Universal Dependencies

Universal Dependencies is fast becoming the dependency formalism of choice for new treebanks and has recently been used for several projects annotating historical language corpora (Zeldes and Abrams 2018, Coptic; Luukko et al. 2020, Akkadian; Swanson and Tyers 2022, Hebrew). The PROIEL and AGLDT corpora have additionally been converted to Universal Dependencies.

While dependency grammars after Tesnière have tended to hew close to the structure of the surface syntax, per e.g., Figure 1 (Osborne and Maxwell 2015; Osborne and Gerdes 2019, 5), Universal Dependencies prioritises semantic relations (de Marneffe et al. 2021, 257). It follows that, in principle, all function words are subordinated to their objects, auxiliaries to their content word

counterparts, and copulas to their predicate nominals (for a full list see Osborne and Gerdes 2019, 4–5). Universal Dependencies therefore runs counter to the tradition of dependency grammars that have arisen since Tesnière (Osborne and Maxwell 2015).

### 3.2.1. Universal Dependencies: A Compromise between Surface- and Syntax-semantic Representations

Given Universal Dependencies's prominence, it is worth considering in some detail the criticisms that have been voiced. Universal Dependencies has been criticised for its prioritisation of sentence-semantics over surface-syntactic structure (Osborne and Maxwell 2015; Gerdes and Kahane 2016; Osborne and Gerdes 2019). However, while this decision lies outside the mainstream of dependency grammars after Tesnière, the present author sees no problem with this, provided the semantics-first principle is adopted consistently.

Universal Dependencies is (syntactically) monostratal (de Marneffe et al. 2021, 268), and therefore represents a compromise between a representation of the surface syntax and the underlying syntactic-semantic relationships. It is a necessary consequence of this that neither of these will be represented consistently, as the designers recognise (de Marneffe et al. 2021, 268): "…UD representations end up looking like a hybrid of deep and surface-oriented representations, but where the tree structure is primarily determined by predicate-argument structure."

In other words, Universal Dependencies trees are structured primarily in terms of semantic relations, but because Universal Dependencies is monostratal, they also include as nodes elements of

surface syntax. The problem with Universal Dependencies from a purely linguistic perspective, therefore, is not so much its departure from the representation of surface syntax in favour of semantic relations, but that it represents no single linguistic layer consistently (Osborne and Gerdes 2019, 10–12).

To understand why Universal Dependencies is the way it is, it is worth observing that Universal Dependencies is far from motivated by purely linguistic Considerations (see, e.g., de Marneffe, MacCartney, and Manning 2006). The sometimes-conflicting goals of Universal Dependencies are outlined as follows (abbreviated from https://universaldependencies.org/introduction.html). Universal Dependencies sets out to be:

> 1. …satisfactory on linguistic analysis grounds for individual languages.
>
> 2. …good for linguistic typology…
>
> 3. …suitable for rapid, consistent annotation by a human annotator.
>
> 4. …easily comprehended and used by a non-linguist…
>
> 5. …suitable for computer parsing with high accuracy.
>
> 6. [Able to] support well downstream language understanding tasks (relation extraction, reading comprehension, machine translation, …). (ellipsis original)

Only goals 1 and 2 are explicitly linguistic in character; the others are user-oriented (3, 4) and computational (5, 6). Indeed, goal 4 might be argued to run directly counter to a purely linguistic objective. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that inconsistencies, in purely linguistic terms, are inherent in the annotation scheme.

### 3.2.2. Prague Dependencies: Separating Surface-syntax and Semantics

An alternative approach is to split the treebank into multiple layers, as is done by the Prague Dependency Treebank. Prague dependency grammar consists of two layers above the morphological and textual, namely the ANALYTICAL and the TECTOGRAMMATICAL (Hajič et al. 2017, 557–58).

The analytical layer describes the surface syntax of sentences as a dependency tree (Hajič et al. 2017, 560–62). The nodes of the tree are the words of the sentence, that is, elements separated by blank spaces, along with the punctuation (on which see further below). The tree's edges (for the most part) represent the grammatical relation holding between a syntactic head and a dependent, e.g., SUBJECT, DIRECT OBJECT, etc. The surface-syntactic nature of the annotation is shown, for example, in the fact that prepositions head their objects and modals head their content verbs (although this does not apply in the case of non-modal auxiliaries, on which see Osborne and Maxwell 2015, 247).

Complementing the surface-syntactic layer is the tectogrammatical layer, which represents "the underlying dependency structure of the sentence" (Hajič et al. 2017, 563; see further 563–72; cf. de Marneffe et al. 2021, 268), that is, the syntactic-semantic layer (Fučíková et al. 2015, 62; Hajič et al. 2017, 556). At this layer of representation nodes correspond to content words, with function words viewed as "complex features" of these content words (Hajič et al. 2017, 563). This is to say that function words are not nodes in their own right.

While the Prague Dependency Treebank arguably represents linguistic layers more consistently, it also suffers from linguistic incoherence elsewhere. As discussed below, both Prague Dependencies and Universal Dependencies include punctuation marks in their trees. However, there are good reasons for not seeing these as syntactic in nature. This different status of punctuation marks is noted in passing by Hajič et al. (2017, 560–61), who state, in reference to the Prague dependency formalism: "Most of the edges represent dependency relations, while others stand for various linguistic or technical phenomena, e.g. coordination, apposition, punctuation, etc."

## 3.2. Implications and Applications

It is not the purpose of the present paper to argue for one or another approach. Rather, my goal is to consider how the subject of a particular research project affects the kind of formalism one might want to adopt. It is clear from the preceding discussion that the goals of the designers of a system, e.g., for machine translation, will likely not fully align with those of the theoretical linguist (for similar observations along these lines, see also Haug 2015, 194). In the following, I consider three applications of treebanks to open questions in BH research, and how these affect the features of the treebank.

# 4.0. Application of Treebanks to Biblical Hebrew Research

## 4.1. Syntax-semantics Interface

It has been observed in the general linguistic literature that the selectional restrictions between the verb and the patient/theme argument are greater than those between the verb and the agent (for some discussion and illustration see Crellin 2016, 90–94). This is to say that the theme/patient argument has the potential to disambiguate verbal senses in a way that the subject cannot.[4] A study concerned with such selectional restrictions may be more interested in the semantic structure of the verb's arguments than in the syntactic mechanism by which the grammatical relations are structured in the surface syntax, such as through function words like אֵת (cf. discussion above). For such a study, therefore, a formalism that prioritises semantics/lexical content over surface syntax, such as Universal Dependencies, or the semantic layer of Prague Dependencies, may be a better choice than one that does not, such as the surface syntactic layer of Prague Dependencies, or PROIEL.

## 4.2. Surface Syntactic Structure and Word Order

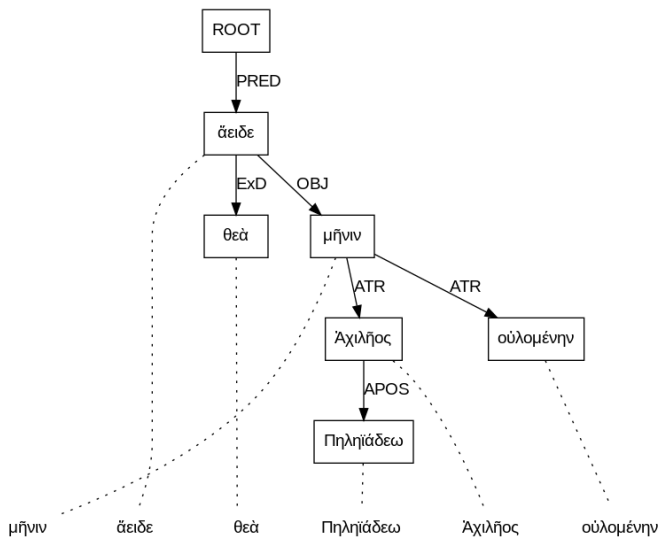
When comparing BH texts with texts written in an Old Indo-European language, such as Latin or Greek, an important issue to

[4] For the disambiguating role of other sentence participants in general, see, e.g., Katz and Fodor (1963).

consider is the relationship between word order and surface syntax. In Latin and Greek, it is frequently the case that constituents are broken up with elements of other constituents (Bamman and Crane 2006). This state of affairs breaks the *projectivity* condition, which "requires each dependency subtree to cover a contiguous region of the sentence: a word and its transitive dependents must span a contiguous sequence in the linear order" (Mambrini and Passarotti 2013, 178).

The non-projectivity of Greek can be seen in the first two lines of the *Iliad* (text per Munro and Allen 1920), analysed in Figure 5 (following the analysis in Mambrini and Passarotti 2013, 178), where μῆνιν [anger.ACC] is head of both Ἀχιλλος [Achilles.GEN] and οὐλομένην [accursed.ACC], but these dependencies do not "span a contiguous sequence in the linear order," as required by the projectivity condition (Mambrini and Passarotti 2013, 178).

Figure 5: Dependency analysis of Iliad 1.1–2 according to AGLDT

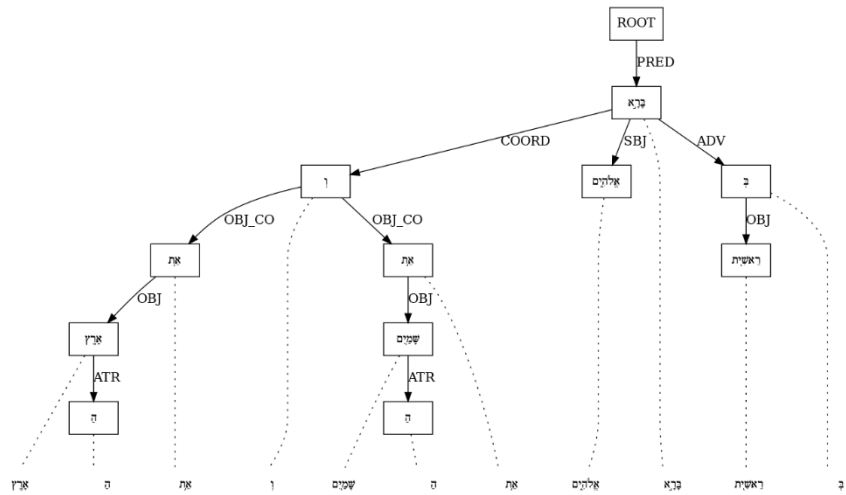


By contrast, BH is much more projective than Latin and Greek. Its projectivity may be observed in the dependency (AGLDT) analysis of Gen. 1.1 in Figure 6 (facing page), where all subtrees of a given node are represented in the linear order as contiguous sequences.[5]

In situations of language contact, as seen, for example, in New Testament Greek, it is in principle possible that crosslingual influence may be seen in the relative levels of projectivity observed. Ponti (2016, 543) observes that the level of projectivity (a surface-syntactic phenomenon) in later varieties of Greek (Postclassical) is higher than in earlier varieties (Classical, Archaic). At least in the case of the Greek New Testament, however, a likely projective influence on the language is that of Hebrew (and Aramaic). Ponti does not mention this possibility. In order to establish the extent to which crosslingual influence plays a role in the development towards projectivity in Greek, it would be possible to use dependency treebanks of BH, the Greek New Testament, and other varieties of Greek, to compare directly the levels of projectivity. Such an analysis could be conducted on the basis of a single surface-syntactic annotation layer.

[5] The Hebrew text of Gen. 1.1 used in this section was sourced from the Unicode/XML Leningrad Codex, version UXLC 1.4, https://tanach.us, accessed 17 June 2022.

Figure 6: Dependency analysis of Gen. 1.1 according to AGLDT



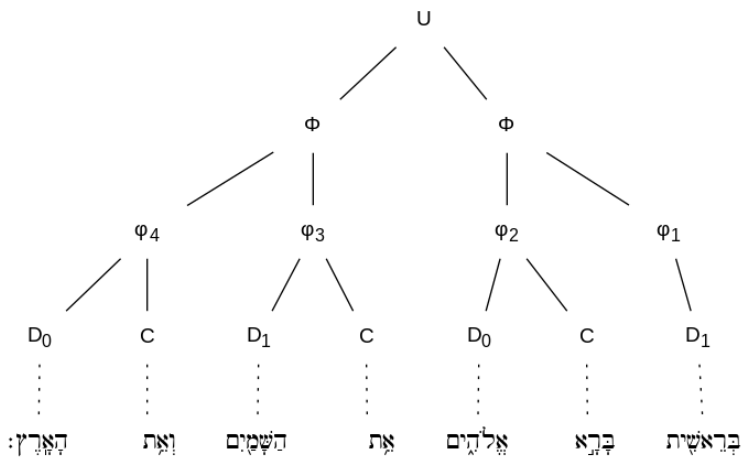

## 4.3. Syntax-phonology Interface as Interpreted through Masoretic Punctuation

The accent systems in the Hebrew Bible have been an area of particular interest to Geoffrey Khan (see most recently Khan 2020b). Ancient punctuation systems are known to follow different principles from their modern counterparts (Wingo 1972 for epigraphic Latin; Morpurgo Davies 1987, for epigraphic ancient Greek; Zemánek 2007, 214, for Ugaritic; Crellin 2022 for epigraphic Northwest Semitic). These principles have been argued to be prosodic in nature (e.g., Morpurgo Davies 1987; Devine and Stephens 1994; Crellin 2022).

While it has been argued that Masoretic punctuation provides a syntactic analysis of the sentence (Aronoff 1985), a growing body of literature points to the roots of the Masoretic punctuation system being in the prosody of BH rather than directly in the syntax

(Dresher 1994; Khan 2020b; Pitcher 2020; 2021; 2023; Crellin 2022).[6] Figure 7 provides an analysis of Gen. 1.1 in prosodic terms (see Park 2020, 15, Table 5, for the hierarchical status of disjunctive accents in Hebrew; see also the analysis at https://www.tanakhml.org/d21.php2xml?sfr=1&prq=1&psq=1&lvl=99).

Figure 7: Prosodic tree analysis of Gen. 1.1[7]




Surface-syntax and prosody have been shown to be related crosslinguistically, and some of the implications of this for BH have been explored over the past few decades (see, e.g., Dresher 1994; Crellin 2022 for examples, and references to the general

[6] I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for the references to Sophia Pitcher's work. I have not had time to engage with these works since being made aware of them, but include them here for completeness.

[7] Abbreviations in Figure 7: U = Utterance; ϕ = Major Phrase; φ = Minor Phrase; C = Conjunctive; D = Disjunctive. The subscript numbers relate to the strength of the division: the lower the number, the stronger the division. See, e.g., Dresher (1994).

linguistic literature). However, this research has primarily concerned the relationship between prosody and Phrase Structure Grammar, particularly through the phenomenon of EDGE ALIGNMENT (for edge alignment, see, e.g., Selkirk 2014 [1996]; for the application to BH, see, e.g., Crellin f.c.). To the best of my knowledge, the relationship between Dependency Grammar and prosody has not been explored for BH. A dependency treebank could be very helpful for such a project. In contrast to many current approaches, however, I suggest that a treebank built for this purpose for BH is best separated into two layers, one surface-syntactic, the other for prosody/punctuation.

Both the Prague Dependencies and Universal Dependencies formalisms allow for, and, indeed, expect, punctuation to be included in the (surface) syntactic layer of annotation. In two treebanks of Latin and Greek, AGLDT and PapyGreek, modern editorial punctuation has been included in the syntactic layer in this way. This is problematic, since this punctuation is introduced to facilitate reading by modern readers (Haug et al. 2009, 27; Reuben Pitts, §3.3, https://reubenjpitts.github.io/Corpus-of-the-Epigraphy-of-the-Italian-Peninsula-in-the-1st-Millennium-BCE/vademecum).[8]

The likely non-syntactic status of ancient punctuation means that its place is not properly in the syntactic layer. There is, therefore, a good case for separating it from the surface-syntactic layer of annotation, as is done in PROIEL (see Haug et al. 2009, 27) and CEIPoM

[8] It is not clear that punctuation as it is used in modern texts written in European languages relates directly to syntax or indeed to anything linguistic (Krahn 2014, 63–74; Neef 2015, 711–12; see also Crellin 2022, 7).

(https://reubenjpitts.github.io/Corpus-of-the-Epigraphy-of-the-Italian-Peninsula-in-the-1st-Millennium-BCE/vademecum).

## 5.0. Conclusion

I observed that relatively few treebank authors provide an in-depth justification for using the particular formalism they adopt. Since dependency treebanking of BH is in the early stages, I set out to provide an overview, first, of existing treebanking efforts for ancient languages, and then to survey the implications of adopting any one of the three Dependency Grammar formalisms that have been used for treebanking ancient languages. This included a more in-depth consideration of the criticisms that have been made of Universal Dependencies, which is becoming a standard. Finally, I considered the application of treebanking to three areas of BH linguistic research—the syntax-semantics interface, projectivity and the syntax-phonology interface as interpreted through Masoretic punctuation.

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# NOTES ON THE RECIPROCAL FUNCTION OF *NIFʿAL* IN BIBLICAL HEBREW*

*Ambjörn Sjörs*

## 1.0. Introduction

Reciprocal constructions in Biblical Hebrew (BH) have recently gained considerable attention, in particular reciprocal anaphoric expressions (Bar-Asher Siegal 2020; Staps 2020), e.g., וַיֹּ֤אמְרוּ֙ אִ֣ישׁ אֶל־אָחִ֔יו 'they said to one another' (Exod. 16.15). In addition to these, mutual situations in BH can also be expressed morphologically by the verb. It is widely assumed that the N-stem (*nifʿal*), for example, can express mutuality (GKC §51d; JM §51c), e.g., וְהִנֵּ֣ה שְׁנֵי־אֲנָשִׁ֣ים עִבְרִ֔ים נִצִּ֖ים 'behold, two Hebrews were struggling together' (Exod. 2.13[1]).

Needless to say, the N-stem does not only express mutual situations, and for purpose of interpretation, it is reasonable to

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[1] All English translations of biblical texts are according to the *English Standard Version*, unless otherwise specified.

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ask what linguistic features inform mutual meaning. It has previously been suggested that mutual meaning is conditioned by the lexical semantics of a given verb (Klein 1992, 293–94; Jenni 2012, 240). The mutual meaning of the input (G-stem), however, is not always obvious; compare, for example, שָׁפַט ‘judge, decide’ versus נִשְׁפַּט ‘plead, dispute’ and יָעַץ ‘advise, plan’ versus נוֹעַץ ‘consult’. Moreover, some reciprocal N-verbs lack a corresponding input in BH, e.g., נִצָּה ‘struggle’ and נוֹכַח ‘argue’, and their lexical semantics must be established on the basis of stems other than the G-stem and/or comparative material.

The purpose of this investigation is to advance knowledge on the reciprocal function of the N-stem by investigating the factors that condition its mutual meaning.

## 1.1. Mutual Situations

On the semantic level, a mutual situation is a situation in which there are at least, and prototypically, two participants who each perform two identical semantic roles (e.g., agent and patient) in an identical reverse relation to each other (Haspelmath 2007, 2088; Nedjalkov 2007, 6–7).

Mutual situations may or may not involve several different sub-events; compare, for example, *Mary and John told each other a secret* and *Mary and John kissed*. In the former example, the situation consists of two telling events and two secrets, and the two sub-events can be conceptualised sequentially. In the latter example, the mutual situation is conceptualised as just one event (under normal circumstances), and the two kisses are presented as simultaneous and virtually indistinguishable. The former kind

of situation may be called a *multiplex* mutual event, and the latter *uniplex* (Haspelmath 2007, 2106–9).

Languages frequently express uniplex and multiplex mutual events with different reciprocal constructions. Uniplex mutual events are often expressed using so-called *lexical reciprocals*, also known as *allelic predicates*, which are predicates that express a mutual situation by themselves, without being derived in a regular way from a non-mutual base. Lexical reciprocals exist in all languages and typically fall into a limited number of semantic classes of predicates (Haspelmath 2007, 2105), such as verbs of competition (*fight*, *quarrel*), verbs of joint action (*communicate*, *consult*), and verbs of connecting (*combine*, *unite*, *mix*).

Multiplex mutual events, in turn, are always expressed with *grammatical reciprocals* (Haspelmath 2007, 2109), i.e., constructions that can be derived by means of morphological or syntactic modifications, or by a combination of them, from an input that lacks mutual meaning (Nedjalkov 2007, 10).

Uniplex mutual events are also frequently expressed with so-called *lexicalised reciprocals*, also known as *reciprocal deponents*, which are predicates with reciprocal morphology and mutual meaning that lack a corresponding unmarked non-mutual input. While lexicalised reciprocals always express uniplex mutual events (Haspelmath 2007, 2109), they may have historically expressed multiplex events. The Norwegian lexicalised reciprocal *se-s* ‘meet’, for example, comprises *se* ‘see’ and an old reflexive-reciprocal marker *-s*, and can be reconstructed as ‘see each other’. Through language change, however, it lexicalised as ‘meet’, and

a situation described by *se-s* can only be interpreted as a simultaneous event with low distinguishability between the participants and sub-events (Kemmer 1903, 111).

The existence of reciprocal constructions in language can be thought to be motivated by a communicative need to present a mutual situation from the viewpoint of the entire set of participants in a single coherent situation (Haspelmath 2007, 2019). At the same time, uniplex mutual events can sometimes be expressed via so-called discontinuous reciprocal constructions (in contrast to simple constructions), in which one of the participants is mentioned as a non-subject. This construction may be used to assign asymmetric discourse prominence to the participants, which can be conceptualised in terms of figure-ground alignment. In a uniplex mutual event, such as *The bicycle collides with the building*, for example, the subject and the oblique object have the same thematic roles, but *the bicycle* is conceptualised as a figure, and the oblique object as ground (Gleitman et al. 1996). The discontinuous reciprocal construction may also be used to assign different degrees of agency or volition to the participants (Dimitriades 2007, 398–402).

Moreover, in so-called mutual antipassive constructions, one of the participants may be omitted altogether, e.g., *He fights*. In these constructions, the identification of a reciprocant is backgrounded and not crucial in the communicative context (Lichtenberk 2000). At the same time, mutual antipassive constructions can be construed as involving a plurality of participants, because the syntactically omitted reciprocant can remain semantically implied by the meaning of the verb phrase.

## 1.2. The N-Stem and the Reciprocal Middle

The N-stem in (Classical) BH primarily expresses the middle and medio-passive voice of the G-stem (Gzella 2009; Van Wolde 2019). This grammatical function is a consequence of the fact that the N-stem historically is a morphological modification used to derive verbs from adjectives, specifically the verbal adjective *qatil-*, which itself is mostly middle and passive (Testen 1998, 137–38; Kouwenberg 2010, 300).

In typological perspective, middle marking tends to occur with a similar set of semantic classes of verbs across languages (Kemmer 1993, 16–20). Using examples from BH to illustrate the recurring morphology, these semantic classes include, among others: translational and non-translational motion, e.g., נִמְלַט 'flee' and נֶהְפַּךְ 'turn'; mental situations (emotion, cognition, perception), e.g., נִבְהַל 'be dismayed', נוֹדַע 'become known', and נִרְאָה 'appear'; emotive speech actions, e.g., נָלוֹן 'grumble'; and mutual events, e.g., נִלְחַם 'fight' (Van Wolde 2019).

Since the same form-meaning pairing is found in language after language, the middle voice can be viewed as a network of functions that are conceptually related by universal human experience. In Kemmer's view (1993, 109–23), the semantic commonality of middle situation types is the human speaker's conceptualisation of the relative elaboration of events, i.e., the distinguishability of the participants and sub-events. The reciprocal middle, for example, is characterised by a low degree of internal event complexity relative to an ordinary transitive event, and can be used by the speaker to 'turn down' the distinguishability between the participants and sub-events in a mutual situation. Thus, since

there is a low degree of distinguishability between the relations that constitute the mutual situation, the middle voice lends itself to describe uniplex mutual events.

### 1.3. Aim and Method

The aim of this investigation is to systematically describe the linguistic features that inform the mutual meaning of the N-stem in BH, including both the syntactic and semantic properties of the reciprocal construction. It will do so by investigating the N-verbs classified as reciprocal by Klein (1992), whose corpus comprises some 4100 verb forms in the N-stem. According to Klein's (1992, 286–87) analysis, 224 verb forms (5.5 percent) describe mutual situations. These verb forms are distributed over eleven roots, but it may be noted that 167 of the total number of tokens involve the verb נִלְחַם 'fight'.

It is also worth noting that Klein's list excludes verbs that express what Kemmer (1993) calls collective situations, e.g., נֶאֱסַף 'gather', נִבְקַע 'cleave', נוֹעַד 'assemble by appointment', נִקְבַּץ 'gather', and נִפְרַד 'separate'. For the analysis of these verbs as describing collective situations, see Garr (2021).

## 2.0. Analysis

The reciprocal N-verbs are presented in order of frequency, beginning with the most common. The verbs formed on דב"ר, או"ת, and מל"ך, whose interpretation is problematic, are presented last.

## 2.1. נִלְחַם ‘fight’

Two voices can be reconstructed for the G-stem of **lḥm*. An active voice can be reconstructed on the basis of Classical Arabic *laḥama* ‘fit, join (TR)’ (*WKAS* L 341), and a middle voice on the basis of Syriac *lḥem*, *nelḥam* ‘fit, suit’ (Payne Smith 1903, 240).[2] Thus, the mutual meaning of the N-stem can be connected with the lexically reciprocal verb **lḥm* G ‘fit, join’, which can express that two participants take part in the action of the verb (e.g., ‘they fit together’). In BH, it has taken on the secondary sense of hostile conjoining, i.e., ‘fight’.[3]

The N-verb נִלְחַם is attested in 167 examples. In the majority of these, one of the reciprocants is expressed as an oblique argument (Staps 2018), e.g., מִמֶּנּוּ שֶׁבִי ׀ וַיִּשְׁבְּ בְיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּלָּחֶם ‘he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive’ (Num. 21.1).[4] In this example, the discontinuous construction may be used to assign different degrees of agency or volition to the participants, so

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[2] In BH, the G-stem is attested four times and only in Psalms (35.1a, 1b; 56.2, 3), e.g., לְחֹם אֶת־לֹחֲמָי ‘fight against those who fight against me’ (Ps. 35.1). For the possible connection between **lḥm* ‘fit’ and לֶחֶם ‘bread, food’, see Krotkoff (1969).

[3] For the semantic development, compare BH נֶאֱבַק ‘wrestle’ (Gen. 32.25, 26) and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic אבק ‘attach, cling’ (Sokoloff 2002, 76), and BH נִפְתַּל ‘wrestle’ (Gen. 30.8) and Classical Arabic *fatala* ‘twist’ (Lane 2334). As indicated by Jastrow (1903, 8), אבק may be a biform of חבק.

[4] The most frequently used preposition is -בְּ, which may reflect the historical background of the verb as ‘fit (with, in)’.

that the subject position assigns both instigation and participation to its referent, while the oblique position assigns only participation to its referent, e.g., 'he attacked the Israelites' (*NIV*).

The N-verb נִלְחַם is also frequently used in the sense of 'fight' without mentioning a reciprocant. In many cases, such a reciprocant is inferable, e.g., וַיִּלָּחֲמוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּנָּגֶף יִשְׂרָאֵל 'So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated' (1 Sam. 4. 10). Other times, נִלְחַם may be thought of as antipassive, e.g., אַךְ הֱיֵה־לִי לְבֵן־ חַיִל וְהִלָּחֵם מִלְחֲמוֹת יְהוָה 'Only be valiant for me and fight the LORD's battles' (1 Sam. 18.17). In this case, the identification of a reciprocant is backgrounded and not crucial in the communicative context.

In only two examples, the subject participants are mentioned by the verb:

(1) תְּנוּ־לִי אִישׁ וְנִלָּחֲמָה יָחַד
'Give me a man, that we may fight together.' (1 Sam. 17.10)

(2) וְסִכְסַכְתִּי מִצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרַיִם וְנִלְחֲמוּ אִישׁ־בְּאָחִיו וְאִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ
'And I will stir up Egyptians against Egyptians, and they will fight, each against another and each against his neighbour…' (Isa. 19.2)

In both examples, the situation described by נִלְחַם can be interpreted as a mutual event. In the middle voice, this mutual situation has low event elaboration, i.e., there is zero distinguishability between the participants and sub-events.

In (1), the situation can be interpreted as a uniplex mutual event, in which the fighting and its participants are presented as simultaneous and virtually indistinguishable. The adverb יָחַד is used to explicitly express that it is the subject participants that

are the reciprocants, rather than someone implied or inferred (see above). In (2), the anaphoric pronominal phrases pull apart the uniplex mutual event and distinguish its different sub-events and participants. The reason may be contrastive focus, i.e., to contrast the fact that the Egyptians fight each other against the implicit idea that they fight against others.

## 2.2. נוֹעַץ ‘consult’

The etymological background of **wʿṣ* is unclear (Kogan 2015, 203–4), but it is possible to reconstruct both an active and a middle function in the G-stem. Evidence for the active function is provided by Classical Arabic *waʿaẓa* ‘exhort, admonish, warn, give advice’ (Lane 2953), and BH יָעַץ ‘advise, counsel’ (BDB 419). Evidence for the middle function is provided by BH יָעַץ ‘plan, decide’ (*HALOT* 421), which may be thought of as a mental middle, e.g., ‘deliberate, think over (in order to reach a decision)’.[5] When there is a plurality of participants, such a situation may be interpreted as mutual, e.g., אַךְ מִשְּׂאֵתוֹ ׀ יָעֲצוּ לְהַדִּיחַ ‘They only consult to cast him down from his excellency’ (Ps. 62.5 *KJV*). In other words, the middle G-stem can be ‘take advice’ both in the sense of ‘deliberate, think over’ (of an individual), and in the sense of ‘consult, discuss’ (of a plurality of participants). Thus, the mutual meaning of the N-stem can be straightforwardly connected with יָעַץ in the sense of ‘consult, discuss’.

[5] For the same kind of polyfunctionality, see Akkadian *malāku* ‘give advice’ and ‘ponder, deliberate, come to a decision’ (*CAD* M/1 154–56).

נוֹעַץ is attested 22 times. In four examples (Isa. 45.21; Ps. 71.10; 83.6; Neh. 6.7), the verb form is finite and plural without an explicitly mentioned subject, e.g.,

(3) הַגִּ֣ידוּ וְהַגִּ֔ישׁוּ אַ֖ף יִוָּעֲצ֣וּ יַחְדָּ֑ו
'Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together!' (Isa. 45.21)

These verb phrases describe uniplex mutual events and there is zero distinguishability between the participants and sub-events. The adverb יַחְדָּו, which is used in all four examples, may be viewed as explicitly indicating that the subject participants are the reciprocants (Bar-Asher Siegal 2020, 167–68), rather than someone implied or inferred.

In nine examples, the verb form is singular, but the verb phrase involves a reciprocant mentioned by a prepositional phrase: אֶת־ 'with' (1 Kgs 12.6 || 2 Chron. 10.6; 1 Kgs 12.8 || 2 Chron. 10.8; Isa. 40.14), עִם 'with' (1 Chron. 13.1; 2 Chron. 32.3), and אֶל־ (2 Kgs 6.8; 2 Chron. 20.21). These discontinuous reciprocal constructions can be interpreted in terms of figure-ground alignment: the subject position assigns discursive topicality and a higher degree of agency or volition to its referent.

In six examples, the verb form has a plural subject that is explicitly mentioned (1 Kgs 12.6 || 2 Chron. 10.6; 1 Kgs 12.9 || 2 Chron. 10.9; 30.2, 23), e.g.,

(4) וַיִּוָּעַ֣ץ הַמֶּ֣לֶךְ וְשָׂרָ֔יו וְכָל־הַקָּהָ֖ל בִּירוּשָׁלִַ֑ם לַעֲשׂ֥וֹת הַפֶּ֖סַח
'For the king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had taken counsel to keep the Passover' (2 Chron. 30.2)

In these constructions, נוֹעַץ is followed by a verb phrase that mentions the decision reached via consultation. Thus, נוֹעַץ can be also be translated as 'decide' (*HALOT* 422), i.e., 'consult (in order to reach a decision)'.

When the verb form is singular and no participant other than the subject is mentioned (1 Kgs 12.28; 2 Chron. 25.17), נוֹעַץ can be interpreted as antipassive, e.g., וַיִּוָּעַץ הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁנֵי עֶגְלֵי זָהָב 'So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold' (1 Kgs 12.28). In the relevant examples, the verb phrases are followed by *wayyiqtol*s, which recount the decision reached on the basis of consultation.

## 2.3. נִשְׁפַּט 'plead, dispute'

The G-stem of **ṯpṭ* can be reconstructed as active 'judge, decide' and as middle 'process, litigate'. The evidence for active G **ṯpṭ* comes from BH שָׁפַט 'judge, decide' (BDB 1047), e.g., יִשְׁפֹּט יְהוָה בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶיךָ 'May the LORD judge between you and me!' (Gen. 16.5). As shown by the use of the prepositional phrase בֵּין...וּבֵין 'between', the situation of deciding and discriminating can be thought of as an object-oriented mutual situation, in which the subject manipulates two objects in a mutual relationship. The evidence for middle G **ṯpṭ* comes from the Aramaic of the Aḥiqar proverbs: [*m*]*h yšpṭwn ʿqn ʿm ʾš* 'Why should wood strive with fire?' (*TAD* C:1.1.88). In this case, the subject manipulates itself in a mutual relationship with another participant. The BH deverbal noun מִשְׁפָּט in the sense of 'process, procedure, litigation' (BDB 1048) can also be thought to reflect a middle function

of *ṯpṭ*; see, for example, the phrases בּוֹא בְּמִשְׁפָּט עִם ‘enter into process with’ (Isa. 3.14; Job 22.4) and בּוֹא בְּמִשְׁפָּט יַחְדָּו ‘enter into process together’ (Job 9.32). Thus, the mutual meaning of the N-stem can be connected with the lexical reciprocal G *ṯpṭ* ‘process, litigate’.

The N-verb נִשְׁפַּט is attested seventeen times. In one example, the verb form is plural and the subject participants can be interpreted as reciprocants:

(5) הַזְכִּירֵנִי נִשָּׁפְטָה יָחַד
‘Put me in remembrance; let us argue together’ (Isa. 43.26)

In the middle voice, this mutual situation has low event elaboration, i.e., there is zero distinguishability between the participants and sub-events. The adverb יָחַד is used for explicit expression that the subject participants are the reciprocants, rather than someone implied or inferred.

In twelve examples, the verb is complemented by a prepositional phrase. The complements of the prepositional phrases עִם (Joel 4.2; 2 Chron. 22.8) and אֵת, when followed by a pronominal suffix (1 Sam. 12.7; Ezek. 17.20; 20.35, 36b; 38.22), can be interpreted as comitative participants. When אֵת is followed by a noun phrase (Isa. 66.16; Ezek. 20.36a; Prov. 29.9), the morphological analysis is ambiguous between the comitative preposition and the differential object marker, e.g., כִּי בָאֵשׁ יְהוָה נִשְׁפָּט וּבְחַרְבּוֹ אֶת־כָּל־בָּשָׂר ‘For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh’ (Isa. 66.16). If אֵת is identified as the differential object marker, it may indicate that the object participant has lower agency and volitionality in the mutual situation. In Isa. 66.16, for example, it may be that the referent of ‘all flesh’

is unwilling to be a reciprocant. This interpretation lends itself to one example where אֵת is unambiguously the differential object marker: הִנְנִי נִשְׁפָּט אוֹתָךְ עַל־אָמְרֵךְ לֹא חָטָאתִי 'Behold, I will bring you to judgment for saying, "I have not sinned."' (Jer. 2.35).[6]

In four examples, no participant other than the subject is mentioned. The examples in Psalms (9.20; 37.33; 109.7) can be interpreted as medio-passive of active שָׁפַט 'judge, decide' (BDB 1047). The example in Isaiah can be interpreted as antipassive with a reciprocant whose identity is generic: אֵין־קוֹרֵא בְצֶדֶק וְאֵין נִשְׁפָּט בֶּאֱמוּנָה 'No one enters suit justly; no one goes to law honestly' (Isa. 59.4).

## 2.4. נוֹכַח 'argue'

The G-stem of יכ"ח is not attested in BH, but its meaning can be reconstructed as 'be firm, right' (Jastrow 1903, 577). Support for this reconstruction is provided by the C-stem הוֹכִיחַ 'decide, adjudge, prove' (BDB 406), which can be interpreted as a factitive derivation ('correct') of the erstwhile G-stem (Nöldeke 1910, 191). Morphemes that mean 'right' also mean 'straight, level, equal' in many languages (Buck 1949, 895), which presupposes a mutual situation between two entities opposite each other; cf. BH נָכֹחַ 'what is situated straight ahead' and נֹכַח 'what is opposite' (*HALOT* 699). Thus, the mutual meaning of the N-stem can be connected with a lexical reciprocal G יכ"ח 'be opposite'. The meaning 'argue' may have lexicalised from a specialised use of 'be opposite' in the sense of 'oppose, be in opposition'.

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[6] Jeremiah also attests the use of נִשְׁפַּט לְ- (Jer. 25.31), which may be used to similar effect.

The N-verb נוֹכַח is attested three times. In one example, the verb form is plural and codes both reciprocants: לְכוּ־נָ֣א וְנִוָּכְחָ֔ה יֹאמַ֖ר יְהוָ֑ה 'Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD' (Isa. 1.18). In another example, there is a plurality of participants but one of them is expressed by a prepositional phrase headed by עִם 'with': שָׁ֣ם יָ֭שָׁר נוֹכָ֣ח עִמּ֑וֹ 'There an upright man could argue with him' (Job 23.7).

In a third example, the N-stem can be interpreted as mediopassive of יכ"ח in the sense 'be right', but the text is problematic: הִנֵּ֣ה הוּא־לָ֠ךְ כְּסוּת֨ עֵינַ֜יִם לְכֹ֣ל אֲשֶׁר־אִתָּ֗ךְ וְאֵ֥ת כֹּ֛ל וְנֹכָֽחַת 'Look, this is a covering of the eyes (viz. a compensation) for you, before all who are with you and with everyone (else), and you are hereby set right' (Gen. 20.16, my translation: AS).[7]

## 2.5. נִצָּה 'struggle'

The G-stem of נצ"י is not attested in BH, but its meaning can be reconstructed as 'quarrel, contend' on the basis of the deverbal noun מַצָּה 'strife, contention' (BDB 663). The G-stem with this meaning is attested in Aramaic, e.g., Samaritan Palestinian Aramaic G *nṣy* 'quarrel' (Tal 2000, II:543), and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic G *nṣy* 'quarrel' (Sokoloff 2002, 771).[8] Thus, the mutual

[7] The proposed emendation in *BHS* is to read ואת כֻּלּוֹ נכחת or וְאֵתְּ כֻּלּוֹ נכחת. The Samaritan version has ואת הכל ונוכחת.

[8] This meaning of נצ"י is presumably connected with נוֹצָה 'plumage'. According to medieval Arabic lexicographers, for example, the meaning of Classical Arabic L *nṣy* 'quarrel' properly means the grasping of one another by the scruff (*Lisān* 4447); compare, for example, Spanish *pelear* 'quarrel' and *pelo* 'hair' (Buck 1949, 1371). The BH C-verb הִצָּה 'have a

meaning of the N-stem can be connected with a lexical reciprocal G נצ"י ‘contend, quarrel’.

נִצָּה is attested five times and the verb form is always plural. In three examples, the subject is explicitly mentioned and is dual (Exod. 2.13; Lev. 24.10; 2 Sam. 14.6), e.g., וְהִנֵּה שְׁנֵי־אֲנָשִׁים עִבְרִים נִצִּים ‘behold, two Hebrews were struggling together’ (Exod. 2.13). In a fourth example, duality is not explicit, but may be considered implied. The Septuagint, for example, translates וְכִי־יִנָּצוּ אֲנָשִׁים ‘When men strive together’ (Exod. 21.22) as ἐὰν δὲ μάχωνται δύο ἄνδρες ‘when two men fight’. In the fifth example, the verb phrase is marked by reciprocal morphemes: כִּי־יִנָּצוּ אֲנָשִׁים יַחְדָּו אִישׁ וְאָחִיו ‘If two men get into a hand-to-hand fight’ (Deut. 25.11 *NET*). The use of syndeton (instead of a preposition) in אִישׁ וְאָחִיו is unique, and it is not self-evident that the phrase expresses a multiplex event. Rather, it is possible that it draws attention to the fact that it is a fight between men (Staps 2020, 62 fn. 3).

Thus, the situation described by נִצָּה can be interpreted in all examples as a uniplex mutual event. In the middle voice, this situation has low event elaboration, i.e., there is zero distinguishability between the participants and sub-events.

## 2.6. נִפְגַּשׁ ‘meet’

The G-verb פָּגַשׁ ‘meet, encounter’ (BDB 803) is transitive as a rule, and the object is mentioned as either a noun phrase (Gen. 33.8; 1 Sam. 25.20; Isa. 34.14; Jer. 41.6) or a pronominal suffix

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fight with (אֵת)’ (*HALOT* 715) can be analysed as a denominative derivation of a noun of this root, such as נוֹצָה ‘plumage’.

(Gen. 32.18; Exod. 4.24, 27; 2 Sam. 2.13; Hos. 13.8).[9] See, for example

(6) אֶפְגְּשֵׁמוֹ כְּדֹב שַׁכּוּל וְאֶקְרַע סְגֹר לִבָּם
'I will fall upon them like a bear robbed of her cubs; I will tear open their breast' (Hos. 13.8)

(7) וּפָגְשׁוּ צִיִּים אֶת־אִיִּים וְשָׂעִיר עַל־רֵעֵהוּ יִקְרָא
'And wild animals shall meet with hyenas; the wild goat shall cry to his fellow' (Isa. 34.14)

In Hos. 13.8, the verb phrase describes a transitive event with one agent and one patient. In Isa. 34.14, the verb phrase has been interpreted as describing a mutual situation by the *ESV*, perhaps informed by the mutual situation expressed in the subsequent clause.

It is possible that the two meanings 'meet' and 'encounter' reflect two inflections, e.g., active 'happen on, encounter' and middle 'meet (by chance)'. It is also possible to interpret פָּגַשׁ 'meet' as expressing an asymmetric mutual situation, in which the subject is figure and the complement ground.

In the N-stem, which is attested three times (Ps. 85.11; Prov. 22.2; Prov. 29.13), the subject is explicitly mentioned in all examples and is always dual, e.g., חֶסֶד־וֶאֱמֶת נִפְגָּשׁוּ 'Steadfast love

[9] In one example, the verb is complemented by a prepositional object headed by -בְּ (Prov. 34.14). It is not clear whether אֵת in Isa. 34.14 should be identified with the comitative preposition or the differential object marker, but while there is no conclusive evidence for constructions with the former, the latter is unambiguously attested twice (1 Sam. 25.20; Jer. 41.6). The frequent reference to the object as a pronominal suffix also indicates preference for direct over oblique object marking.

and faithfulness meet' (Ps. 85.11). This can be interpreted as a uniplex mutual event, i.e., the situation is conceptualised as only one simultaneous event. The middle voice modifies the situation so that it receives low event elaboration, and there is zero distinguishability between the participants and sub-events.

## 2.7. נָדוֹן 'dispute, contend'

The G-stem of די"ן is primarily 'judge, plead the cause' (BDB 192). In addition to this active function, it is also possible to posit a middle function on the basis of the deverbal noun מָדוֹן 'strife, contention' (BDB 193); compare also וְלֹא־יוּכַל לָדִ֔ין עִם שֶׁתַּקִּיף [ק'; כ' שהתקיף] מִמֶּנּוּ 'he is not able to dispute with one stronger than he' (Eccl. 6.10). Accordingly, it appears that G די"ן can be 'argue' both in the sense of 'plead the cause' and in the sense of 'dispute, contend'. Thus, the mutual meaning of the N-stem can be connected with G דִּין 'dispute, contend'.

The N-stem of די"ן is attested once: וְיִשְׂרָאֵ֣ל נָ֠ס אִ֨ישׁ לְאׇהָלָ֜יו: וַיְהִ֣י כׇל־הָעָ֗ם נָד֛וֹן בְּכׇל־שִׁבְטֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל 'Israel had fled, each man to his own tent, and all the people were in dispute among all the tribes of Israel' (2 Sam. 19.9–10, my translation: AS). In the N-stem, this mutual situation has low event elaboration, i.e., there is zero distinguishability between the participants and sub-events.

## 2.8. נֶחֱרַב 'fight'

Two voices can be reconstructed for the G-stem of **ḥrb*. The active voice is evidenced by Classical Arabic *ḥaraba* 'despoil, plunder' (Lane 540), and perhaps by BH חָרַב 'attack, smite' (BDB

352).[10] The middle voice is evidenced by Classical Arabic *ḥariba* ‘be despoiled, plundered’ and ‘be angry’ (Lane 540). Both voices are also evidenced by Sabaic *ḥrb* G ‘plunder, pillage’ (Bron 2012, 85) and ‘wage war’ (Beeston 1982, 69), the latter of which can be derived from middle ‘plunder each other’.[11] Thus, the mutual meaning of נֶחֱרַב can be derived from the lexically reciprocal G **ḥrb* ‘plunder each other, wage war’.

The N-verb נֶחֱרַב is attested in one example: דָּם זֶ֣ה הָחֳרֶ֔ב נֶחֶרְב֥וּ הַמְּלָכִ֖ים וַיַּכּ֣וּ אִישׁ֙ אֶת־רֵעֵ֔הוּ ‘This is blood; the kings have surely fought together and struck one another down’ (2 Kgs 3.23). This can be interpreted as a uniplex mutual event: in the middle voice, the situation has low event elaboration and there is zero distinguishability between the participants and sub-events.

## 2.9. דב"ר

The N-verb נִדְבַּר is attested four times. It is an open question whether נִדְבַּר expresses mutuality, but it may be noted that none

[10] The G-stem of חר"ב in BH is attested in the imperatives חֶרְבָ֣ (Jer. 50.21) and חִרְב֥וּ (Jer. 50.27), but it is possible that the relevant verb forms should be derived from **ḫaraba*, i.e., an active inflection of stative חָרֵב ‘be waste, desolate’ (BDB 351). For the existence of an active and a middle inflection of the **ḥrb*, see Classical Arabic *ḫaraba* ‘reduce to ruin’ and *ḫariba* ‘be ruined’ (Lane 715).

[11] The G-stem identification of Sabaic *ḥrb* ‘wage war’ is deduced from the fact that its infinitive is not suffixed by *-n*.

of the ancient versions translate it with reciprocal grammatical constructions.[12]

(8) וְאַתָּה בֶן־אָדָם בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ הַנִּדְבָּרִים בְּךָ אֵצֶל הַקִּירוֹת וּבְפִתְחֵי הַבָּתִּים וְדִבֶּר־חַד אֶת־אַחַד אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו

'As for you, son of man, your people who talk together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, say to one another, each to his brother' (Ezek. 33.30)

(9) חָזְקוּ עָלַי דִּבְרֵיכֶם אָמַר יְהוָה וַאֲמַרְתֶּם מַה־נִּדְבַּרְנוּ עָלֶיךָ: אֲמַרְתֶּם... אָז נִדְבְּרוּ יִרְאֵי יְהוָה אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ

'"Your words have been hard against me", says the LORD. But you say, "How have we spoken against you?" You have said… Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another.' (Mal. 3.13–16)

(10) גַּם יָשְׁבוּ שָׂרִים בִּי נִדְבֵּרוּ

'Even though princes sit plotting against me' (Ps. 119.23)

In Ezek. 33.30, the verb phrase וְדִבֶּר־חַד אֶת־אַחַד 'one said to the other' is an elaboration of הַנִּדְבָּרִים, but it is not self-evident that the participle phrase itself expresses mutuality. The Targum, for example, translates it by רנן 'murmur'. Thus, it is possible that the N-stem is used for emotive speech action; compare, for example, נָלַן 'grumble' and נָאַנַח 'groan'. Likewise, the situation expressed by נִדְבְּרוּ in Mal. 3.16 is mutual, but it is not self-evident if mutuality is expressed by the anaphoric phrase אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ, the N-

[12] The Septuagint translates as λαλέω 'talk, speak' and καταλαλέω 'speak evil', the Peshitta as *rny* 'think, meditate' (Ezek. 33.30; Ps. 119.23) and *ʾmr* 'say' (Mal. 3.13), and the Targum as מלל and סגי למללא 'talk a lot' (Mal. 3.13). For דִּבֵּר בְּ- 'speak evil of' (D-stem), see, for example, Num. 12.1; 21.7; Job 19.18.

verb, or both. The *KJV* translates נִדְבַּר in both Mal. 3.13 and 3.16 as ‘speak much, often’.

## 2.10. או"ת

The morphological analysis of the verb forms וַיֵּאָתוּ ‘they agreed’ (2 Kgs 12.9), יֵאָתוּ לָנוּ ‘they will agree with us’ (Gen. 34.22), נֵאָוֹת לָכֶם ‘we will agree with you’ (Gen. 34.15), and נֵאָוֹתָה לָהֶם ‘let us agree with them’ (Gen. 34.23) is ambiguous; they may reflect either the N-stem (**yēʾōt-* < **yiʾʾāt* < **yinʾawit*) or the G-stem (**yēʾōt-* < **yiʾāt-* < **yiʾwat-*). The fact that the object complement is introduced by -לְ, while oblique reciprocants of reciprocal N-verbs are usually headed by עִם or אֵת, may indicate that the relevant forms are G-verbs.

## 2.11. מל"ך

The N-stem of מל"ך is attested once: וַיִּמָּלֵךְ לִבִּי עָלַי ‘My heart deliberated’ (Neh. 5.7, my translation: AS). Since no other participant is mentioned, this N-verb can be interpreted as a mental middle derived from G מל"ך in the sense of ‘advise, counsel’ (‘take advise’). Since the G-stem with this meaning is unattested in BH, but common in Aramaic, it is likely that the meaning of the input of נִמְלַךְ in Nehemiah results from Aramaic influence (Wagner 1966, 77). Moreover, since מל"ך is primarily ‘rule, dominate’ and ‘possess, own’ in West Semitic (Kogan 2015, 91–92), it is possible that the meaning ‘advise’ in Aramaic results from Akkadian influence (Kogan 2015, 419 fn. 1202). Incidentally, *namluk-* is one of a few reciprocal N-verbs in Akkadian still in use in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian period (Kouwenberg 2010, 295).

## 3.0. Summary and Conclusions

The investigation has shown that N-verbs that express mutual situations have, or can be thought to have had, an input with mutual meaning, i.e., an input that is a lexical reciprocal: נִלְחַם can be derived from **lḥm* G ‘fit’, נוֹעַץ from **wʿṣ* G ‘take advise, discuss’, נִשְׁפַּט from **špṭ* G ‘process, litigate’, נוֹכַח from **ykḥ* G ‘be opposite’, נִצָּה from **nṣy* G ‘contend, quarrel’, נִפְגַּשׁ from *pgš* G ‘meet’, נָדוֹן from **dyn* G ‘dispute, contend’, and נֶחֱרַב from **ḥrb* G ‘wage war’. It has also been suggested that נִדְבַּר may be an emotive speech action middle, that נִמְלַךְ may be a mental middle, and that the verb forms derived from אוּת may be G-verbs.

When the G-stem has both active and middle meaning, the reciprocal N-verb can most straightforwardly be connected with the middle G-stem; נִשְׁפַּט, for example, can be derived from **ṯapiṭ-* ‘process, litigate’. Since both the (middle) G-stem and the N-stem of these roots express mutual situations or formerly did so, it is possible that the N-stem was used when the speaker intended to present a mutual situation from the viewpoint of the entire set of participants in a single coherent situation. Indeed, N-verbs that are lexicalised reciprocals (e.g., נוֹכַח and נִצָּה) may have been so frequently used in the N-stem to express the mutual meaning of their roots that the G-stem itself was lost.

When the N-verb is used in simple reciprocal constructions, the verb phrase is frequently either marked by a reciprocal adverb or the subject is explicitly mentioned and usually dual. The reciprocal adverbs יַחְדָּו and יַחַד may be used to explicitly express that it is the subject participants that are the reciprocants, rather

than someone implied or inferred. The selection of sociative morphemes (יַחְדָּו and יַחַד) over anaphoric pronominal phrases in uniplex mutual events may be motivated by the low event-elaboration—see examples (1), (3), (5). Anaphoric pronominal phrases, in turn, may be used for contrastive focus—see example (2) and Deut. 25.11 in §2.5). The discontinuous reciprocal construction, finally, can be used to assign different degrees of discourse prominence to the reciprocants and/or different degrees of agency or volition (e.g., נוֹכַח).

The investigation has also shown that mutual situations expressed by N-verbs are usually uniplex mutual events. An avenue for further research is contrasting mutual situations expressed by the N-stem with mutual situations expressed by the Dt-stem (*hitpaʿel*). If the Dt-stem can be analysed as a pluractional and detransitive derivation of the G-stem, it can be hypothesised that mutual situations expressed by the Dt-stem are multiplex mutual events.

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# HEALED BY 'HIS WOUND(S)', 'HIS BRUISING', OR 'IN HIS COMPANY'?: ISAIAH 53.5 AND *DAGESH MAVḤIN*[*]

*Benjamin Kantor*

## 1.0. The Philological Problem of חֲבֻרָה in Isaiah 53.5

Most conventional or traditional translations of Isa. 53.5 read something like the following:

(1) וְהוּא֙ מְחֹלָ֣ל מִפְּשָׁ֔עֵנוּ מְדֻכָּ֖א מֵעֲוֹנֹתֵ֑ינוּ
מוּסַ֤ר שְׁלוֹמֵ֙נוּ֙ עָלָ֔יו וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ֙ נִרְפָּא־לָֽנוּ׃
'And he was pierced for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities,
the chastisement of our peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.'

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There is, however, one potential philological problem with this translation. The word translated as ‘wounds’ (*NIV*; *ESV*) or ‘stripes’ (*KJV*) may not—at least according to the Tiberian-pointed Masoretic Text—mean ‘wounds’ or ‘stripes’ at all.

## 1.1. The Lexeme חַבּוּרָה ‘wound’ in the Bible

In the Hebrew Bible, the consonantal sequence חב(ו)רה is normally vocalised with a geminated *bet* as the lexeme חַבּוּרָה/חַבָּרָה ‘wound, stripe’. Indeed, aside from the verse under consideration, wherever the sequence חב(ו)רה is used to refer to ‘wound(s)’ or ‘stripe(s)’ (6x), it has *dagesh forte* in the *bet*:

(2) כִּי אִישׁ הָרַ֙גְתִּי֙ לְפִצְעִ֔י וְיֶ֖לֶד לְחַבֻּרָתִֽי׃
‘for I killed a man for my wound, and a young man for my stripe’ (Gen. 4.23)

(3) כְּוִיָּה֙ תַּ֣חַת כְּוִיָּ֔ה פֶּ֥צַע תַּ֖חַת פֶּ֑צַע חַבּוּרָ֖ה תַּ֥חַת חַבּוּרָֽה׃
‘burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe’ (Exod. 21.25)

(4) פֶּ֥צַע וְחַבּוּרָ֖ה וּמַכָּ֑ה טְרִיָּֽה
‘wound and stripe and a fresh blow’ (Isa. 1.6)

(5) הִבְאִ֖ישׁוּ נָ֣מַקּוּ חַבּוּרֹתָֽי
‘my stripes stink and rot’ (Ps. 38.6)

(6) חַבֻּרֹ֣ות פֶּ֭צַע תַּמְרִ֣וק (ק'; כ': תמריק) בְּרָ֑ע
‘stripes that wound cleanse away evil’ (Prov. 20.30)

As noted, the only case of a noun represented by the consonantal sequence חב(ו)רה without a *dagesh* occurs in our passage

in Isa. 53.5.[1] It is, of course, possible that the Hebrew Bible admits two morphological or phonological byforms for the word 'wound', namely חַבּוּרָה and חֲבוּרָה. The pattern קַטּוּלָה is itself quite rare in Biblical Hebrew (BH) (Huehnergard 2015, 55); the pattern קְטוּלָה is much more common, also overlapping with the feminine singular passive participle in the *qal*. There are at least some other pairs that may exhibit parallel byforms, whether in קַטּוּל or קַטּוּלָה, e.g., אֲשֻׁרַי 'my steps' (Ps. 17.5) versus אַשֻּׁרִי 'my step' (Job 31.7); שְׁכוּלֶה 'bereaved' (Isa. 49.21) versus וְשַׁכֻּלָה 'and bereaved' (Song 4.2) (Fox 2003, 201).

While such parallels could, at least theoretically, shed light on the form in Isa. 53.5, the form וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ is unlikely to reflect a mere byform of חַבּוּרָה without some semantic nuance or distinction of its own. If such were the case, the apparent byform חֲבוּרָה would be attested only here. By contrast, the parallel examples of אשר- and שכ(ו)לה cited above attest to their byforms without gemination many times throughout the Bible. It would thus be hard to explain why the lone case of the byform חֲבוּרָה—without any apparent semantic distinction—occurs only here in Isa. 53.5, especially when the more regular form חַבּוּרָה occurs in Isa. 1.6.

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[1] Note, however, the non-similar sounding form חֶבְרָה, which occurs once in the phrase לֶחֶבְרָה 'in company' (Job 34.8). This same noun may also occur in the Samaritan Pentateuch (and oral reading) in וחברתם = [waːbaːraːˈtimma] 'and their company' (Gen. 49.7).

## 1.2. The Lexemes חַבּוּרָה ‘wound’ and חֲבוּרָה/חֲבוֹרָה ‘company; association’ in Rabbinic Hebrew

A separate lexeme חֲבוּרָה (or חֲבוֹרָה), with a distinct meaning, is, however, attested in Rabbinic Hebrew (RH). In MS Kaufmann of the Mishna, for example, the form without *dagesh* consistently has the meaning ‘company’ or ‘association’, e.g., לֹא יַעֲשֶׂנּוּ דָמִים עַל חֲבוֹרָה ‘he may not charge its value against the association’ (m. Pesaḥ. 7.3); שְׁתֵּי חֲבוֹרוֹת שֶׁהָיוּ אוֹכְלוֹת ‘two associations which were eating’ (m. Ber. 7.5).[2] The form with *dagesh*, on the other hand, has the meaning ‘wound’ or ‘stripe’, as in the Bible, e.g., זָרַק לַעֲשׂוֹת חַבּוּרָה ‘he threw [it] to inflict a wound’ (m. Shabb. 11.6).[3]

## 1.3. Summary of the Philological Problem

According to the vocalisation traditions reflected in the Leningrad Codex (L) and RH,[4] then, it seems that at face value the vocalisation of the form וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ in Isa. 53.5 reflects a reading like ‘and in his association’, ‘and in his company’, or ‘and by union with him’. While it is possible that חֲבוּרָה could reflect a mere

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[2] See also m. Eruv. 6.6; m. Pesaḥ. 7.3, 13; 8.6–7; 9.8–10; m. Beṣa 2.3. Although MS Kaufmann has *ḥolem*, note that חֲבוּרָה/חֲבוֹרָה are presumably byforms in Rabbinic Hebrew (possible due to the *resh*); the form with *shureq* is typical in Hebrew lexica (Jastrow 1926; *Milon Even-Shoshan*). Note also that the Babylonian tradition of RH often has *shureq* here, e.g., חֲבוּרוֹת (m. Ber. 7.5; Yeivin 1985, 917).

[3] See also m. Shabb. 11.6; m. Beṣa 2.8; m. BabaQ. 8.1, 3, 5; m. Sanh. 11.1; m. Shevu. 5.5. Translations in consultation with Neusner (1988).

[4] There is some variation in the presence of *dagesh* in the lexeme חבורה in the Babylonian tradition of RH (Yeivin 1985, 962–63).

byform of חַבּוּרָה ‘wound’, it seems unlikely that such a (phonological?) byform without any semantic distinction of its own would be attested in just this one verse when the result would actually be homophonous with a distinct lexeme meaning ‘company’ or ‘association’. After all, the word חֲבוּרָה ‘company; association’ would have been known to the early tradents of pre-Tiberian reading traditions. Indeed, it would be reasonable to expect a rendering like ‘and by his wound’, ‘and by his bruise’, or ‘and by his stripe’ to have been passed down in the reading tradition with the vocalisation וּבְחַבֶּרֶתוֹ**.

## 2.0. Isaiah 53.5 in Modern Translations and Commentaries

Why, then, is the rendering ‘and by his wound(s)’ or the like nearly universal in major translations and commentaries? There are likely two factors at play. First, interpreters have probably afforded more weight to what rendering would best fit the wider context of the verse than to strict adherence to the vocalisation of the Tiberian tradition. Second, it is plausible that the Septuagint’s rendering has exerted significant influence on the course of interpretive history.[5] These two explanations, of course, are not

[5] The Septuagint translates ובחברתו as *τῷ μώλωπι αὐτοῦ* ‘by his wound’. Elsewhere in the Septuagint, the lexeme *μώλωψ* is only ever used to translate what the Tiberian vocalisation tradition vocalises as חַבּוּרָה (Gen. 4.23; Exod. 21.25; Ps. 37.6; Isa. 1.6). In fact, the only place where חַבּוּרָה is not translated with *μώλωψ* is in Prov. 20.30, where the phrase חַבֻּרוֹת פֶּצַע ‘blows that wound’ is rendered as *ὑπώπια καὶ συντρίμματα* ‘bruises and fractures’. The Septuagint rendering may indeed reflect a reading tradition that pronounced ובחברתו as /wa-v-ħabbuːraːθoː/ (i.e.,

mutually exclusive. In any case, however we explain it, this interpretation is nearly universal among translators and commentators.

## 2.1. Modern Translations

In a survey of over thirty English Bible translations' renderings of the phrase וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ in Isa. 53.5, *all of them* exhibit the rendering 'and by his wound(s)' or some synonymous expression. None of them exhibit a rendering such as 'and in his company':[6]

- *NIV*, *NASB*, *CSB*, *HCSB*, *NHEB*, *WEB*, *CPDV*: 'and by his wounds'
- *ESV*: 'and with his wounds'
- *GWT*: 'from his wounds'
- *NET*: 'because of his wounds'
- *KJV*, *AKJV*, *ASV*, *JPS* (1917), *AFV*, *DBT*, *ERV*, *WBT*, Geneva (1587), Bishops' Bible (1568), Coverdale (1535): 'and with his stripes'
- *NKJV*: 'and by His stripes'
- *BSB*: 'and by His stripes'
- *SLT*: 'and in the marks of his stripes'
- *ISV*, Douay-Rheims: 'and by his bruises'
- *YLT*: 'and by his bruise'
- *NASB* (1977), *NASB* (1995), *LSV*: 'and by His scourging'
- Amplified Bible: 'and by His stripes (wounds)'
- *NLT*: 'he was whipped'

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the equivalent of וּבְחַבֻּרְתּוֹ) with gemination. This interpretive tradition seems to be reflected in the New Testament as well (see 1 Pet. 2.24).

[6] Survey conducted online at https://biblehub.com/parallel/isaiah/53-5.htm.

- *CEV*: 'by taking our punishment'
- *GNT*: 'by the blows he received'

Nor do any of these translations appear to footnote the possibility of alternative renderings such as 'and in his company', 'and in his association', or 'and by union with him'. This philological crux is thus not apparent in the English translations surveyed.

## 2.2. Modern Commentaries

A similar pattern is found in modern scholarship and commentaries on this passage. Most modern commentators interpret the phrase as 'and by his wounds' or the like, with no comment on the philological difficulty of a lack of *dagesh* in the *bet*. This is the case, for example, in the commentaries of Westermann (1969, 254) in *The Old Testament Library*, Blenkinsopp (2002, 345) in *The Anchor Bible Commentary* series, and many others as well.[7]

There are, however, some notable exceptions to this trend. Goldingay and Payne (2006, 307–8), in *The International Critical Commentary* series, specifically refer to the lexeme in question in v. 5 as '*ḥabburāh*' (with a double *bb*!). Nevertheless, they do not comment on the fact that the form in the MT is without a *dagesh*; rather, they follow the conventional interpretation of 'wound'. And yet, without connecting it to the vocalisation of the MT, they

[7] See also Buttrick (1956, 622–23); Duhm (1968, 399); McKenzie (1968, 130–31, 134–35); Herbert (1975, 107, 112); Beuken (1983, 187, 217–18); Watts (1987, 224, 226, 231); Grimm (1990a, 83; 1990b, 412–13); Hanson (1995, 163–64); Berges (1998, 403–5); Koole (1998, 253–54); Oswalt (1998, 384, 387–89); Childs (2001, 407, 414–16); Schmidt (2013, 226, 230–31).

note that the Targum's rendering (ובדנתנהי לפתגמוהי 'and in that we attach ourselves to his words'; see fn. 9) may point to the more common meaning of 'uniting' or 'joining' for the root חב"ר.

Baltzer, in the *Hermeneia* commentary series, renders Isa. 53.5 differently from all other commentators. He translates וּבַחֲבָרְתּוֹ נִרְפָּא־לָנוּ as 'and through his fellowship/invocation *we* have received healing'. Despite the unconventional translation, however, Baltzer does not base his rendering on the absence of *dagesh* in the term חֲבָרְתּוֹ. Rather, by appealing to alternate meanings associated with the root חב"ר, he suggests two possible interpretations (2001, 392–429, especially 411–12):

1. First, drawing on examples in which חב"ר refers to '(snake) charming' (e.g., Deut. 18.11; Ps. 58.6), he suggests that the phrase might be rendered as something like 'and through his (snake) charming we received healing'. This would be an allusion to the bronze serpent in Num. 21.4–9 and the exclusive healing ability of Moses in such a context. It might also be set against other contemporary cultic practices and invocations.
2. Second, he suggests that the root חב"ר might better be regarded as referring to 'community' in this context, albeit without any reference to the lack of *dagesh* in the word. Instead, he calls up words like חֶבֶר 'community', חָבֵר 'companion', and חַבָּר 'fellow-guildsman'. This leads him to the possible alternative rendering of 'through fellowship with him we received healing'. Similarly, this 'community' or 'guild' of the Servant is to be distinguished from contemporary foreign cults and guilds.

While Baltzer touches on literary arguments that may shed light on alternative interpretations of the word חֲבֻרָתְוֹ(וּבַ), his philological arguments actually find further support in the vocalisation of the sequence ובחברתו in Tiberian Hebrew and the attestation of this word in RH.

There does appear to be more interaction with the exceptional lack of *dagesh* among commentators writing in Modern Hebrew. Paul, for example, writing in the *Miqra le-Yisraʾel* series, notes that "this is the lone occurrence in which the *bet* of the word חֲבוּרָה is without a *dagesh*" (translation mine). Nevertheless, he explains the phrase וּבַחֲבֻרָתְוֹ נִרְפָּא־לָנוּ as 'and because of his wounds, we have been healed' (translation mine) (Paul 2008, 368). In the English version of his commentary, however, published as part of the *Eerdmans Critical Commentary* series (2012), he expounds on this point. After noting that "in every other occurrence... the letter *beth* has a *dagesh* in this word," he suggests that perhaps the Masoretes "omitted it in order to interpret the word as 'his company', thereby tempering the gravity of the servant's condition" (Paul 2012).

Ḥakham, in his Hebrew commentary on Isaiah in the *Daʿat Miqra* series (1984), presents a similar picture. Although he regards the form in Isaiah as a case of the lexeme חַבּוּרָה 'wound', he specifically notes how the lack of *dagesh* in וּבַחֲבֻרָתְוֹ (Isa. 53.5) contrasts with the presence of *dagesh* in פֶּצַע וְחַבּוּרָה 'bruise and wound' (Isa. 1.6). When commenting on the exceptional vocalisation, he writes the following in a footnote:

> The pointing חֲבֻרָתְוֹ (*ḥavurato*) with *bet rafa* is intended out of respect for Israel. Its purpose is to hint at the fact that they are not really bruised or wounded, but that they are

> good friends (*ḥaverim ṭovim*) and their society (*ḥevratam*) brings healing to the world. And this same meaning comes through in Targum Jonathan, who renders [the phrase] וכדנצית לפתגמוהי חובנא ישתבקון לנא [as] ובחברתו נרפא לנו 'and when we obey his words, our iniquities will be atoned for us'. That is, when we attach ourselves (*niṯḥaber*) to him and obey his teaching, our iniquities will be atoned for and we will be healed from our blows (Ḥakham 1984, 570–71, translation mine).

It is difficult to know exactly how to take Ḥakham's explanation in the footnote, since he treats the word as חַבּוּרָה 'wound' in the main body of the commentary. His argument appears to be that, while the original intention of the biblical author was 'wound' or 'stripe', the oral reading tradition eventually revocalised this word as 'connection' or 'association' to draw attention to the positive aspects of union with Israel. An oral realisation implying Israel's bruising was thereby avoided. This could be compared to cases like the end of Job 2.9, where the euphemistic phrase בָּרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים וָמֻת׃ 'bless God and die!' is written in the consonantal text, but '*curse* God and die!' is intended—and thus the unanimous translation. Given that the euphemism of Job 2.9 is found already in the consonantal text,[8] however, there may be better examples for comparison. Note, for instance, cases where לראות—normally vocalised as a *qal* verb לִרְאוֹת 'to see'—is vocalised as לֵרָאוֹת 'to appear' (cf. לְהֵרָאוֹת) when פני יהוה 'the face of YHWH' would otherwise be the object of the *qal* verb (Exod.

[8] There is thus no incongruence between the written and reading traditions.

34.24; Deut. 31.11; see Hornkohl 2023, 56–58). Such an explanation might thus satisfy our earlier question about the uniform rendering of modern translations, while at the same time acknowledge that the vocalisation without *dagesh* should mean something different.

In any case, like Paul, Ḥakham admits that the meaning of חֲבוּרָה should be expected to differ from that of חַבּוּרָה, yet concludes that the different meaning was not actually the original intention of the biblical author. Rather, it serves as a sort of respectful way to minimise the hurt and suffering of Israel and/or the Servant. Also, like Goldingay and Payne, Ḥakham sees significance in the Targum. In fact, the relevance of the Targum for the history of interpretation of this passage is touched on by a number of scholars, even if it does not necessarily impact their reading of the MT. Nevertheless, because Targum Jonathan plays an important role in this study, we will presently turn to its rendering of this passage in greater detail.

## 3.0. Targum Jonathan and ובחברתו as ‘and in his company’

While, as noted above, few modern translations and commentaries take וּבַחֲבֻרָתֹו as ‘and in his company’, there may be evidence of this interpretation already in late antiquity. In Targum Jonathan, the phrase ובחברתו נרפא לנו is rendered as וּבִדְנָתֵהּ לְפִתְגָּמוֹהִי חוֹבַנָא יִשְׁתַּבְקוּן לַנָא ‘and in that we attach ourselves to his

words, our debts will be forgiven to us'.[9] The rendering וּבְדִנְתְּנֵהִי 'and in that we attach ourselves' is presumably based on a reading of ובחברתו that sees in it the root חב"ר with the meaning of 'connection' rather than 'wound'. This might imply an interpretation that read ובחברתו as containing the RH lexeme חֶבוּרָה/חֲבוֹרָה 'company; association' rather than the BH lexeme חַבּוּרָה 'wound'.

Although multiple Targum scholars appear to be aware of the possibility that the *meturgeman* worked on the basis of an alternate meaning of the root חב"ר, none seem to identify the connection with the vocalisation of the Masoretic Text. Kim (2008, 89), for example, rather than drawing on the RH parallel חֶבוּרָה/חֲבוֹרָה 'union, association', appeals instead to the term חֶבְרָה 'company':

> The Targum seems to have achieved [the interpretation of 'by our devotion to his words'] by altering the vocalization of בַּחֶבְרָתוֹ to בְּחֶבְרָתוֹ [*sic*!] ('in his company'—through which we gather around him and he is with us), taking the root from חֶבְרָה 'company, companion' (Job 34.8).

While his interpretation of the Targum seems to be on the right track, it does not actually require us to assume that the *meturgeman* had in mind such an alternative vocalisation. For an ancient (or medieval) reader acquainted with various traditions and forms of Hebrew—not just its biblical traditions—the form חֶבְרָתוֹ would already mean 'his company'.

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[9] See Chilton (1997, 253) for translation, especially the rendering of וּבְדִנְתְּנֵהִי as 'and in that we attach ourselves'. Jastrow (1926) glosses the *itpeʿel* form of נה"י, namely אִתְּנֵהִי, as 'to follow eagerly'.

Also important to note here is the fact that the theme of the suffering of the Servant is entirely absent. In fact, the phrase וּבִדְנֵתְנֶהִי לְפִתְגָּמוֹהִי חוֹבַנָא יִשְׁתַּבְקוּן לַנָא in the Targum is part of a wider interpretive vision of the Messiah rebuilding the Temple (Chilton 1997, 253–54). Because the Targum probably has its origins between 70–132 CE, one can imagine why the vision of a triumphant Messiah would have been important. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, the idea that the Messiah would come and restore it to its former glory would be most welcome.[10]

If the more 'original' vocalisation—or at least that of some ancient communities—had been (the equivalent of) וּבְחַבֶּרֶתוֹ 'and by his wound',[11] one wonders if such a socio-historical background might have given rise to the vocalisation in the MT. Schorch (2006; 2009) has argued that the parabiblical traditions

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[10] For more on the social and historical background of this passage in the Targum, see Bruce (1982, 63); Chilton (1997, 253–54; 1999, 135; 2007, 243–44); Evans (2004, 102–3); Kim (2008, 87–89); Huizenga (2009, 196–97); Flesher and Chilton (2011, 171, 189–90); Shepherd (2014, 97–100).

[11] In the Dead Sea Scrolls, in addition to a text that looks like the MT (1Q8 23.15), there is also one manuscript that reflects a plural form of the noun: ובחבורתיו נרפא לנו 'and by his wounds we are healed' (1QIsa[a] 44.11). Though less likely, it is also possible that such an orthography reflects a singular form, since יו- can sometimes be used to reflect just the vowel /o/. Nevertheless, given the likely plural number of the word, the interpretation of 'wounds'—rather than 'associations'—appears to be reflected. One might tentatively suggest, then, that the scribe of 1QIsa[a] pronounced the sequence ובחבורתיו as something like /wa-v-ħabbu:ro:θaw/ (i.e., the equivalent of וּבְחַבּוּרֹתָיו) with *dagesh*.

of various Second Temple Jewish and Samaritan communities exerted influence on their oral readings of the text, apart from any deliberate effort to alter its meaning.

Therefore, as a parabiblical or interpretive tradition about a Messiah who would come and rebuild the Temple developed among certain Jewish communities, this might have predisposed them to vocalise certain words in this passage differently than other communities. When they came to the consonantal sequence ובחברתו, they might have envisioned healing and restoration in the 'company' of the Messiah more instinctively than through the 'wound' of the Messiah. As such, they read the sequence ובחברתו as /wa-v-ħăvu:ra:θo:/ 'and in his company; and in his association' (i.e., the equivalent of וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ) in light of their parabiblical tradition. While such a hypothesis is speculative, it might explain the unique vocalisation of the MT.

Such an interpretive tradition, however, by no means reflects the majority reading in late antiquity nor in the Middle Ages. Its explanatory power is thus limited. It, therefore, behoves us to seek a new explanation that can best account for both the strong interpretive tradition sensitive to the context of the verse and the precise vocalisation of the Tiberian reading tradition.

## 4.0. New Explanation: *Dagesh Mavḥin*

Indeed, while it may be possible to simply read (with Targum Jonathan?) the phrase וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ as containing the RH lexeme חֲבוּרָה/חֶבוּרָה 'company; association', there may be a better philological explanation that adheres closer to the overall sense of the

passage. For this, we may turn to a phenomenon attested in various BH reading traditions known as *dagesh mavḥin* '*dagesh* to distinguish meaning'. This particular morphophonological phenomenon, on which Geoffrey Khan, the honouree of this *Festschrift*, has helped advance our understanding significantly, can shed further light on the phrase וּבַחֲבֻרָתֹו in Isa. 53.5, both in the Tiberian vocalisation of the MT and in the history of its interpretation.

## 4.1. Background on *Dagesh Mavḥin*

Beginning students of BH learn that there are two types of *dagesh*: (1) דגש חזק 'strong *dagesh*', which serves to indicate gemination (or 'doubling') of a consonant (e.g., מְסַפֵּר [masapˈpeːʕ]) and (2) דגש קל 'weak *dagesh*', which indicates the plosive pronunciation of a בגדכפ"ת letter (e.g., מִסְפָּר [misˈpɔːχ]). As one delves deeper into the various reading traditions of BH, however, one encounters other types of *dagesh*. Of particular note for our present purposes is a subclass of 'strong *dagesh*' that has come to be termed *dagesh mavḥin* or '*dagesh* to distinguish meaning'. In short, *dagesh mavḥin* is the (often secondary) gemination of a consonant to distinguish otherwise homophonous words.[12]

In the Tiberian tradition, *dagesh mavḥin* is often used to distinguish 'profane' or 'common' nouns from 'holy' or 'divine' nouns. Note, for example, that while the noun אֵבִיר 'mighty' without *dagesh* is used in reference to God, the noun אַבִּיר is used in

[12] On the phenomenon of secondary gemination for purposes of distinguishing meaning, see Khan (2018). For the employment of *dagesh* to distinguish meaning in the Babylonian Masoretic biblical tradition, see Yeivin (1985, 354–63, 909–12, 940, 1132–33); Khan (2018, 342–44).

reference to people, e.g., אֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב ‘Mighty One of Jacob’ (Gen. 49.24), but cf. אַבִּיר הָרֹעִים ‘chief of the shepherds’ (1 Sam. 21.8). Similarly, the noun עֲצָבִים without *dagesh* means ‘toils’, but the noun עֲצַבִּים with *dagesh* means ‘idols’, e.g., הָעֲצָבִים ‘the toils’ (Ps. 127.2), but cf. הָעֲצַבִּים ‘the idols’ (2 Chron. 24.18) (Khan 2018).

In the Babylonian tradition, similar distinctions are found. Note the difference between כֹּהֲנִים [ko:h(a)ˈni:m] (Job 12.19) in reference to priests generally, but הַכֹּהֲנִּים [hakko:hanˈni:m] (Zeph. 1.4) in specific reference to pagan priests. Similarly, the form לְעָמְלָ֑ [l(כ)-ʕכ:ˈmכ:l] without *dagesh* may be rendered as ‘for/to service (of the LORD)’ (Job 5.7), while the form עָמְלָ֑ [ʕכ:mˈmכ:l] with *dagesh* is interpreted as meaning ‘trouble’ (Job 4.8) (Yeivin 1985, 441, 940; Khan 2018).

In the Samaritan tradition, a form like [ɑ:ˈdɑ:ni] without *dagesh* refers to the one true God, but a form like [ɑ:ˈdanni] with *dagesh* refers to a human master, e.g., [ɑ:ˈdɑ:ni] ‘Lord (divine)’ (Gen. 15.2), but [ɑ:ˈdanni] ‘master, sir’ (Gen. 23.6). Similarly, a proper noun may be without *dagesh*, but a common noun with *dagesh*, e.g., [wˈjɑ:mən] ‘and Yamin’ (Gen. 46.10), but cf. [ˈjammən] ‘(to the) right’ (Num. 20.17) (Ben-Ḥayyim 1977; Florentin 1996, 228–35; Khan 2018).

Finally, a similar phenomenon is attested in RH. Of particular note is the tendency to use *dagesh mavḥin* to distinguish between the ‘concrete’ (or ‘physical’) and the ‘abstract’. Note, for example, that חֲתִיכָה and חֲתִיכָּה may be used for the abstract concept of ‘cutting’ versus the concrete physical meaning of ‘a piece (of something)’, respectively, e.g., וַחֲתִיכַת ‘and cutting off of’ (m.

Pesaḥ. 6.1), but cf. חֻתִּיכָה ‘a portion; a piece’ (m. Ker. 5.4). Similarly, in the Yemenite tradition of RH, גְּבִינָה without *dagesh* may be used for the abstract process of making cheese, but גְּבִנָּה with *dagesh* for cheese itself (Khan 2018, 344–45). In fact, the abstract noun in each of these examples may simply constitute what we would refer to in post-biblical Hebrew grammar as the שם פעולה ‘verbal noun’ of the root.

Note that various scholars, most notably Khan (2018), have appealed to *dagesh mavḥin* to explain other phenomena and philological cruxes in BH. In his view, the anomalous *dagesh* in the form בָּתִּים ‘houses’ originally came into being to distinguish the word from a hypothetical (but plausible) participle form */baːtiːm/ (or */baːtiːn/) ‘spending the night’ in an earlier stage of Northwest Semitic (Khan 2018). Kantor, expanding on an idea posited originally by Khan, has argued that the *dagesh* in the prefix consonant of the *wayyiqṭol* verbal form came about in the late Second Temple period to distinguish the form’s ‘past’ semantics from the ‘non-past’ semantics of the polysemous *yiqṭol* form (Kantor 2020; see also Khan 2021, 319–40).

The mechanism of change that brings about *dagesh mavḥin* is not always clear. In some cases, the form must have originally been polysemous and the gemination developed secondarily merely to distinguish the forms. In other cases, one particular meaning of an originally polysemous form might have been pulled via analogy into a similar-sounding morphological byform. In still other cases, there may have originally been two separate patterns, but they were configured so that the one with

gemination tended to align with certain semantic categories. A combination of such factors is also possible.

However such near-homophonous pairs distinguished only by *dagesh* came about—it is unlikely to have been the same process in all cases—the important point is the resulting synchronic situation. Across the BH reading traditions, there are numerous pairs of words distinguished only by gemination of one of the root letters, which tends to occur in the latter member of contrasting semantic category pairs like the following: (i) 'holy' versus 'profane', (ii) 'divine' versus 'common', (iii) 'monotheistic' versus 'pagan', (iv) 'abstract' versus ' concrete'.

## 4.2. *Dagesh Mavḥin* and Isaiah 53.5

Returning to the near-homophonous pair of חֶבוּרָה and חַבּוּרָה, then, we may tentatively posit that the latter member of this pair constitutes an instance of *dagesh mavḥin*. As was the case in the typology of the examples from RH mentioned above, the noun with the more abstract meaning is without *dagesh* (i.e., חֶבוּרָה), whereas the noun with the more concrete physical meaning is with *dagesh* (i.e., חַבּוּרָה).

While it may be tempting to see the lexemes identified above, namely חֶבוּרָה 'company; association' and חַבּוּרָה 'wound', as fitting this paradigm, such a pair would not actually satisfy the typical criteria for *dagesh mavḥin*. After all, in the RH *comparanda* cited above, there is a high degree of polysemy in each pair. In the pair חֲתִיכָה 'cutting' versus חֲתִיכָּה 'a piece (cut from something)', the semantics of 'cutting' are at the core of each lexeme from the root חת"ך. The same applies to the pair גְּבִינָה 'making

cheese' versus גְּבִנָּה 'cheese'. In each case the root גב"ן has a base semantic association with 'cheese'. There is not, however, any apparent polysemy that would connect the distinct lexemes חֲבוּרָה 'company; association' and חַבּוּרָה 'wound'.

Rather, based on analogy with the pairs חֲתִיכָה 'cutting' versus חֲתִיכָה 'piece cut off' and גְּבִינָה 'making cheese' versus גְּבִנָּה 'cheese', we should perhaps posit the following hypothetical pair: חֲבוּרָה '(process of) wounding; bruising' versus חַבּוּרָה '(physical) wound; bruise'. While this theoretical pair would fit quite nicely with the RH examples of *dagesh mavḥin* to distinguish concrete from abstract, it requires positing the existence of a lexeme, namely חֲבוּרָה '(process of) wounding; bruising', that is unattested elsewhere in ancient or medieval Hebrew literature. Though somewhat speculative, such a hypothesised lexeme would also fit well within the wider context of the verse. Moreover, though largely overlooked in modern scholarship, numerous of the medieval Hebrew grammarians appear to have interpreted the form וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ of Isa. 53.5 in this way (i.e., as a verbal noun) as well. It is thus to their writings that we turn presently.

## 4.3. Medieval Grammarians on Isaiah 53.5 and the Implications for *Dagesh Mavḥin* in חבורה

As implied by the discussion above, seeing *dagesh mavḥin* in the lexeme חַבּוּרָה 'wound; bruise' would imply that the form וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ without *dagesh* found in Isa. 53.5 has the more abstract meaning. Just such an interpretation notably appears to be reflected in at least some of the medieval Hebrew grammarians.

In Jonah ibn Janāḥ's (ca 990–ca 1050 CE) famous lexicon, *Kitāb al-uṣūl*, we find the following comments on the lexeme חבורה (Neubauer 1968, 208–9):

> חבורה [תחת חבורה]. הבאישו נמקו חבורותי. חבורות פצע כלّה جرح وخدش. ومنه عندى وبحبورتو نرفا لنو. وهو اسم الفعل لا اسم الجرح نفسه على زنة [אין קול ענות גבורה.] אין קול ענות חלושה. משפט הבכורה... فكانّه قال وبحبور אתו.
>
> הִבְאֱישׁוּ חַבּוּרֹתָי ‘wound for wound’ (Exod. 21.25). נָמַקּוּ חַבּוּרֹתָי ‘my wounds stink and rot’ (Ps. 38.6). חַבְּרוּת פֶּצַע ‘stripes that wound’ (Prov. 20.30). [The meaning] in all of [these cases] is ‘wound’ and ‘abrasion’. In this sense I [may also cite] וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ נִרְפָּא־לָנוּ ‘and by his חֲבוּרָה we are healed’ (Isa. 53.5), in which [חֲבוּרָה] is the verbal noun (*ism al-fiʿl*)—not the noun [referring to the physical] wound itself—after the pattern of אֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת גְּבוּרָה ‘it is not the sound of crying out in triumph’ (Exod. 32.18), אֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת חֲלוּשָׁה ‘it is not the sound of crying out in defeat’ (Exod. 32.18), [and] מִשְׁפַּט הַבְּכֹרָה ‘right of being firstborn’ (Deut. 21.17)... so it is as if it said וּבְחַבּוֹר אֹתוֹ ‘and in bruising him’. (translation mine)

While Ibn Janāḥ clearly sees the semantics of חבורה as related to جرح ‘wound’ and خدش ‘abrasion’ in all of these passages, he makes the point that in the case of וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ in Isa. 53.5 we are dealing with اسم الفعل ‘the verbal noun’ and لا اسم الجرح نفسه ‘not the noun [referring to the physical] wound itself’. His conclusion that וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ is equivalent to וּבַחֲבוֹר אֹתוֹ ‘and in bruising him’ clearly highlights the nuanced implications of reading it as a verbal noun rather than referring to a physical wound. Though Ibn Janāḥ does not explicitly impute the semantic distinction to the absence of *dagesh*, his comments certainly appear to be consistent

with seeing an abstract versus concrete distinction in חֲבוּרָה ‘(process of) wounding; bruising’ versus חַבּוּרָה ‘wound; bruise’.

A similar reading appears in Judah ibn Balaam’s (1000–1070 CE) commentary on Isaiah (Goshen-Gottstein 1992, 214):

> מוסר שלומנו עליו ובחבורתו נרפא לנו – מענאה אן הד״א אלולי אלפאצ׳ל למא תחמל אלאדאב אלואר֯דה עליה עלי סביל אלמחנה אד׳ כאן לא ד׳נב לה פכאן כל אדב כאן ילזמנא נחן וסלמנא מנה קד חל בה ונזל עליה וכאן בג׳רחה שפאנא. ובחבורתו אסם פעל.
>
> מוּסַר שְׁלוֹמֵנוּ עָלָיו וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ נִרְפָּא־לָנוּ: ‘the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his wound(s) we are healed’ (Isa. 53.5) – Its meaning is that this honourable Servant, in bearing the punishments coming upon him by way of trial, though he had committed no offence, [brought it about that] we escaped intact every punishment that should have fallen on us, [so that] it has befallen him and has come down upon him [instead]. And by his wound(ing) we are healed. [The phrase] וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ is a verbal noun (*ism fiʿl*). (translation mine)

The identification of the word חֲבוּרָה in the phrase וּבַחֲבֻרָתוֹ as an اسم فعل ‘verbal noun’ implies that Ibn Balaam also regarded it as the more abstract ‘(process of) wounding; bruising’ rather than the more concrete ‘wound; bruise’.

## 4.4. The Chronology of *Dagesh Mavḥin* in חבורה

If the form חַבּוּרָה ‘wound, stripe’ came to be secondarily distinguished from חֲבוּרָה ‘(process of) wounding; bruising’ by means of *dagesh* in the *bet*, one might wonder if such a distinction was even present in ancient times at all. After all, if the distinguishing gemination was introduced relatively late in חַבּוּרָה ‘wound’, earlier polysemy could have given rise to a variety of interpretations of

the verse, some of which we may encounter in the ancient versions. Nevertheless, though late innovation may be the case with some instances of *dagesh mavḥin*, the variety of processes by which *dagesh mavḥin* can come about do not require it (see above in §4.1). Indeed, gemination of *bet* in the word חבורה 'wound, stripe' is attested in multiple reading traditions of BH as far back as we can trace:

Babylonian (Yeivin 1985, 962–63)

חַבֻּרוֹת 'wounds' (Prov. 20.30)
חַבֻּרוֹתָי 'my wounds' (Ps. 38.6)

Samaritan (Ben-Ḥayyim 1977)

labbuːˈrɑːti 'for my wound' (Gen. 4.23)
ʕabˈbuːrɑ ˈtɑːt ʕabˈbuːrɑ 'stripe for stripe' (Exod. 21.25)

Because gemination of /bb/ is attested in both the 'Jewish' and the 'Samaritan' branches of BH, we may reasonably posit that the form חַבּוּרָה 'wound, stripe' is at least as old as the late Second Temple Period.[13]

Along the same lines, however, one might question how relevant the concept of *dagesh mavḥin* is for the original interpretation of Isa. 53.5. While gemination of /bb/ in חבורה 'wound' might be as old as the late Second Temple period, the typological evidence for gemination distinguishing 'physical/concrete' versus 'abstract' adduced above is from RH. Moreover, the relevance of this phenomenon for the interpretive history of Isa. 53.5 does

[13] The nominal pattern **qaṭuːla* is more common than **qaṭṭuːla* (see discussion above in §1.1).

not appear to be evidenced before the medieval Hebrew grammarians of the eleventh century. It is thus possible that seeing *dagesh mavḥin* as distinguishing חַבּוּרָה ‘bruise; wound’ from חֲבוּרָה ‘bruising; wounding’ is a later interpretive innovation.

Now while the ‘verbal-noun’ interpretation may not be attested explicitly in antiquity, we may be able to find some examples of gemination to distinguish ‘physical/concrete’ versus ‘abstract’ beyond just RH. After all, Khan’s (2018) argument regarding the form בָּתִּים ‘houses’ is that already in Northwest Semitic gemination came to distinguish (the more physical/concrete form) **batti:n* ‘houses’ from (the more abstract/participial/verbal hypothesised form) **ba:ti:n* ‘spending the night’. Moreover, even though some of the clearest examples of *dagesh* to mark the more concrete entity—e.g., גְּבִנָּה ‘cheese’ versus גְּבִינָה ‘making cheese’—are attested in RH, we may find some similar pairs in the Bible as well. Note that the *dagesh* in the form הַמְּקָרֶה ‘the roof; the rafter’ (Eccl. 10.18) may be regarded as distinguishing the physical entity from the more abstract participial/verbal action in הַמְקָרֶה ‘the one who lays the beams’ (Ps. 104.3).[14] In Babylonian Hebrew, a *dagesh* may distinguish נֹּא ‘raw’ (Exod. 12.9) from the interjection נא ‘please’ without *dagesh*. Similarly, a *dagesh* may distinguish the form עָלֶּהָ [ʕɔ:lˈla:hɔ:] ‘its (FS) leaf’ from something like עָלֶיהָ [ʕɔ:ˈla:hɔ:] ‘upon her’ (see Yeivin 1985, 357–58, 965). One might even regard *dagesh mavḥin* for marking ‘human/profane’ over against ‘divine’ as loosely related to the ‘physical’ versus ‘abstract’ use attested in RH.

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[14] I would like to thank Ben Rothstein for bringing this example to my attention.

## 5.0. Conclusions: Exegetical Ramifications

The purpose of this article is not to overturn the traditional interpretation of Isa. 53.5. In fact, though perhaps requiring a slightly nuanced modification of our interpretation of וּבַחֲבֻרָתֹו from 'and by his wound(s)' to 'and by/in his bruising', a careful analysis of the vocalisation tradition has yielded a rendering largely concentric with traditional interpretations. Rather, the main point of this article has been to draw attention to the fact that the Tiberian vocalised form וּבַחֲבֻרָתֹו is not what we would expect for the simple meaning 'and by his wound(s)' and subsequently to lay out possible suitable explanations for this philological crux.

In the end, we have argued that, as is common in various Hebrew traditions in similar contexts, *dagesh mavḥin* may distinguish the more physical concrete חַבּוּרָה 'wound, stripe' from the more abstract חֲבוּרָה '(process of) wounding; bruising' in a near-homophonous pair. The form without *dagesh* in Isa. 53.5, then, would reflect the more abstract noun of the pair. Exegetically, this may imply that the text envisions the process of physical suffering endured by the Servant as bringing healing rather than focusing on the specific physical wounds themselves. Though often overlooked by modern scholars, this verbal-noun interpretation, based on a precise reading of the Tiberian vocalisation, already appears among the medieval Hebrew grammarians of al-Andalus such as Ibn Janāḥ and Ibn Balaam. At the same time, however, we should be careful to note that this use and grammatical understanding of *dagesh mavḥin* is more common in post-biblical Hebrew and among the medieval grammarians. It thus remains a

question to what extent such an interpretation belongs with the original language of the text and not merely later reception history.

Indeed, we cannot totally rule out the possibility that at least some ancient Jewish communities read ובחברתו in Isa. 53.5 as reflecting the RH lexeme חֲבוּרָה/חֲבוֹרָה 'company; association'. Such a reading may in fact underlie the interpretive tradition behind Targum Jonathan. The vocalisation without a *dagesh* in Tiberian may even reflect the influence of a parabiblical tradition like that of the community in which the Targum developed. From an exegetical standpoint, this would imply that by following the teachings of the Servant and becoming his disciple, one might receive healing. Other interpretations based on taking ובחברתו as 'and in his community' or 'and in his company' are also possible. While it lies beyond the scope of this paper to fully flesh out what exegetical ramifications such a reading might have, we refer the reader to the commentary of Baltzer (2001; see above, §2.2) as an example of at least one possible interpretation.

Nor can we ultimately rule out the suggestion of scholars like Paul and Ḥakham, who argue that the vocalisation may have shifted from חַבָּרְתּוֹ to חֶבְרָתוֹ out of respect for Israel and/or the Servant. As such, this vocalisation should be compared to other reverent mismatches in the Bible, like בָּרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים 'bless God!' when the intended meaning is actually 'curse God!' or לֵרָאוֹת אֶת־פְּנֵי יְהוָה 'to appear before the LORD' when the original meaning might have been 'to see the face of the LORD' (see above in §2.2). The underlying meaning, however, would still be חַבּוּרָתוֹ 'his wound' rather than חֶבּוּרָתוֹ 'his company'.

We should also note that in the late Second Temple Period, there may have been other reading traditions according to which this text was realised as (the equivalents of) וּבְחַבֶּרֶתּוֹ or וּבְחַבֻּרֹתָיו, including that of the Septuagint translators and that of (some of) the Dead Sea Scrolls. In such cases, the traditional rendering referring to the physical wound(s) of the Servant would be the most apt translation. Indeed, wherever חבורה is attested with plural morphology, the 'verbal-noun' interpretation would presumably be excluded, or at least less likely. This point underscores the importance of taking into account multiple oral reading traditions of BH when interpreting the Bible.

Nevertheless, while allowing for a variety of possible explanations,[15] we have argued that positing a distinction between חֲבוּרָה '(process of) wounding; bruising' and חַבּוּרָה '(physical) wound; bruise' is at least one way of respecting the Tiberian vocalisation within its wider interpretive context. It would also constitute one more example of the well-established phenomenon of *dagesh mavḥin* attested in various reading traditions of Hebrew.

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[15] It may even be appropriate to allow for multiple interpretations *intended* by the original author of the text. For more on this concept in the Hebrew Bible, see Paran (1973).

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# WHY DO PSALMS, PROVERBS, AND JOB USE DIFFERENT ACCENTS?

*Elizabeth Robar*

Before scribes used accents and pausal forms, they used spaces. Gentry and Meade (2020) have shown that in an old tradition represented by a Masada Psalms scroll (first century BCE), spacing is the strategy used to divide the text into sense units. The same sense units are delimited by pausal forms and accents in the Aleppo Codex, with spaces sometimes used non-linguistically (e.g., dividing elements of a construct chain). Gentry and Meade (2020, 130) conclude that "the pausal forms and accents are the key terminal markers in A[leppo] and the spacing is only a memory of a past scribal technique."

This simultaneously marks an evolution in the technique used to mark sense units (from spacing to pausal forms and accents) and a united tradition determined to preserve those same sense units. After discussing the similarities between Greek Sinaiticus and Vaticanus and MasPs$^{a}$ in terms of stichometry, Gentry and Meade conclude that

> five hundred years after the original translation, B and S have largely preserved the terminal markers [indicating sense units] of a Hebrew parent text like MasPs$^{a}$. The evidence suggests that the original translation into Greek followed the stichometric layout in poetic texts and even in the earliest texts had spaces corresponding to the reading

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> tradition, and that this tradition was preserved for some time. (Gentry and Meade 2020, 138)

The main sense units were preserved across the evolution of scribal technique, translation into Greek, and change in writing medium from scroll to codex. The sense units superseded any single tradition and were rather embedded into all traditions.

## 1.0. The Three Books

Within the Tiberian tradition, the Masoretic accentuation became the most prominent way of preserving sense units. There are two traditions of accentuation, one for the Three (Psalms, Proverbs, and Job)[145] and one for the other (21) books. The former tradition is heuristically called the 'poetic accents' and the latter the 'prose accents'.

The historical basis for this division is not entirely clear, but the unique position of at least the Psalms seems to have ancient roots. By the first century CE,[146] the gospel of Luke reports Jesus referring to τῷ νόμῳ Μωϋσέως καὶ τοῖς προφήταις καὶ ψαλμοῖς 'the Law

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[145] Also known as ספרי אמ"ת 'books of *ʾemet* ('truth')', *ʾalef* for איוב 'Job', *mem* for משלי 'Proverbs', and *tav* for תהלים 'Psalms'.

[146] 4QMMT$^{d}$ (4Q397), known as *Miqṣat Maʿaśe Ha-Torah* 'Some Works of the Torah'—most likely composed around the end of the second century BCE or beginning of the first century CE (Kratz 2020, 21–23)—also appears to refer to a tripartite canon: [כתב]נו אליכה שתבין בספר מושׁה [ו]בספר[י] הנ[ב]יאים ובדו[ד] 'We have written to you that you might understand the book of Moses, the books of the Prophets and David' (4Q397 f14–21.10).

of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms' (Luke 24.44), possibly indicating Psalms' central importance within Judaism's sacred texts, or its name as an *incipit* to represent the *Ketuvim* 'Writings'.[147]

This distinction extended throughout multiple stages of (what became) the Masoretic tradition. Revell (1977, 183) concluded that the Palestinian fragments containing the three books differed from one another significantly: "the accentuation of the three books was not standardised to nearly the same extent as was that of the 21 books." He proposed as a possible reason that there was a "much greater variety of chant" used for the text of the three books (183).[148] The most compelling piece of evidence for the distinction is a Masoretic list found in T-S NS 287.38.[149] This manuscript is unique, including passages from both the 'prose' and 'poetic' sections in the list. Like the Tiberian system, this MS testifies

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[147] Beckwith (1985, 111) argues in favour of a reference to a tripartite canon; McDonald (2017, 277–86) cautions that the evidence is too meagre, but acknowledges the Psalms' privileged place, nonetheless. Just as the first word of the Hebrew Bible was used as the title for entire books (e.g., בראשית, הדברים), so the first book (e.g., 'Isaiah') of a section may have been used as a title for the entire section (e.g., Latter Prophets). Cf. the gospel of Mark's use of 'Isaiah' to represent a prophetic text actually from the book of Malachi: Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ (Mark 1.2), followed by citing Mal. 3.1.

[148] Revell here relies on the testimony of R. Petachia of Ratisbon who—while travelling around the Middle East towards the end of the 12th century—noted the following while visiting Babylonian synagogues: ויש בחור שיש לו קול נעים ואומר מזמור בקול נעים... ויש מסורות באיזה ניגונים '[When] there is a young man who has a pleasant voice, he recites (lit., 'says') a Psalm in his pleasant voice… tradition determines the melodies [with which he recites the Psalm]' (he-Hasid 2012, 46 [text]).

[149] Described in Revell (1969).

to two different sets of accents, one for verses from the 'prose' books, and one for those from the 'poetic' books. For example, the sign for *revia*ʿ is a prepositive circle for verses from the 'three books', e.g., אַשְׁמִעָה 'Let me hear' (T-S NS 287.38 recto ln 2) || MT אַשְׁמִעָה (Ps. 85.9), whereas in verses from the prose books, it is a vertical stroke above the accented syllable, e.g., הַמַן 'Haman' (T-S NS 287.38 verso ln 14) || MT הָמָן (Est. 3.6).

This distinction extended beyond the Tiberian tradition. In the Babylonian tradition, though identical signs are used both for the 'prose' and 'poetic' books, Ronit Shoshany (2022, 112) has recently demonstrated that they were not used identically.

The early eleventh-century Karaite grammarian ʾAbū al-Faraj Hārūn claims that the poetic books are derived from (פרוע *furū*ʿ 'secondary, derivatives, branches') or complement the books of the Torah (אצול *ʾuṣūl* 'primary, foundations, trunks'), and this derivation or complementation correlates with their distinctive accents. He considers this a traditional view, not a new one (Khan 2020, 2:38–39).

By the end of the Masoretic period, Psalms, Proverbs, and Job had come to be distinguished both in their contents and in their reading tradition, although the relationship between the two—if there is one—remains unclear. What is clear, however, is that the accents aided the reading and the reception of the text in some way. To understand likely options, we will briefly survey the relationship between 'sound'[150] and sacred scripture across multiple religious traditions.

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[150] The recent interest in the role of 'sound' within comparative religion is reflected in, e.g., Laack (2015), Coward (2013; 2019) and Cuffel et. al. (2019, §17).

## 2.0. Sound and Sacred Scripture

In Hinduism the chanting of sacred texts (*mantra*) possesses magical qualities that provide the devotee with an *experience* of the Divine. The *mantra* refers to what Otto (1958, 5–7, 190–93) would call "numinous sounds," sounds that reflect the "holy." The actual words of the sacred Vedas (*sruti*) are afforded this power due to their origin:

> The language of Veda itself is *Śruti*, a rhythm not composed by the intellect but heard, a divine Word that came vibrating out of the Infinite to the inner audience of the man who had previously made himself fit for the impersonal knowledge. (Aurobindo 1998, 10)[151]

The manner of chanting the *Qurʾān,* too, is also primarily geared towards an *experience*. *Qurʾān* recitation is regulated by a series of detailed rules known as *Tajwīd*, largely phonetic rules concerning nasality (*ġunna*), assimilation (*ʾidġām*, *ʾixfāʾ*, and *ʾiqlāb*), pharyngealisation (*tafxīm*), as well as regulation of syllabic duration (*madd*) (Nelson 2011). In the Islamic tradition, the application of *Tajwīd* produces the very sound of the revelation as it was given to the Prophet Muhammad by Gabriel (Nelson 1985, 14). Although the art of reading in the Islamic tradition was concerned with clearly conveying the *meaning* of the text, conveying the accuracy of sound was more fundamental, which falls into the category of *experience.*

[151] This section is based on Coward (2019, 1–18).

This tension between *meaning* and *experience* also characterised the reading of scripture in early Syriac Christianity. Music and sung poetry were the lifeblood of early Syriac liturgy (Harvey 2020a). Hymns, prayers, supplications, and preaching were all sung in either an ornate style called *madrāshā*, characterised by a variety of metres and melodies, or *memrā*, which was much simpler with regard to metre and melody (Harvey 2020b). These liturgical settings were the only time that congregants encountered scripture, through both the cycle of lections and quotes in homilies (Brock 2006). Practices of scripture reading varied according to time and place, most clearly seen in Syriac biblical manuscripts, which testify to a developing system of accents. Segal (1953, 58–77) indicates that, before the seventh century, accents used may have been those indicating punctuation in addition to vocal inflection. From the seventh to tenth centuries, the accents developed differently between the Eastern and Western traditions. The data from the Eastern tradition tend to reflect greater emphasis on the musical performance of the accents (viz., an experience), whereas the Western data reflect the rhetorical value of some accents (viz., facilitating understanding) (see Segal 1953, 80–81). According to Harvey (2020a, 376), the value of music was "*affective:* it made an impact on those who sang and those who heard."

In the Latin-speaking West, scripture was read in the style of plainchant, also known as Gregorian chant. The origins of this style remain unknown, and sources containing actual musical information do not appear until ca 900 CE (Crocker 1990, xv). In contrast to what had gone before, Crocker contends Gregorian

chant was *not* primarily aimed at conveying clearly the words and meaning of the text. Crocker (1995, 44) writes:

> the fact is that the chant fails to communicate its words to the world, even to the faithful. The chant really does not project the words in a way that is immediately perceptible to most listeners… the chant cannot be said to communicate either the sound or the sense of the words with anything like the effectiveness claimed or to be expected for a style allegedly derived from the words… the plurality of pitches by itself hinders the pronunciation as well as the recognition of syllable integrity, and the melodic contours break up the phonetic flow of the words with beautiful but irrelevant distractions. And of course the melismata simply force a suspension of attempts to perceive verbal syntax.

The traditions of reading and chanting sacred texts briefly outlined above may suggest a continuum. At one end are traditions which are primarily concerned with affording an *experience*, such as the Hindu Vedas and, to a lesser extent, Gregorian chant. On the other end are reading traditions that are primarily concerned with affording an *understanding* of the words and syntax and, consequently, the 'plain' meaning of the text.[152] Early Syriac texts would probably fall into this category. The recitation of the *Qurʾān* and pre-classical Byzantine recitation would probably fall somewhere in between these two extremes.

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[152] Although not discussed above, Revell (1976) argues that biblical texts from the Second Temple Period and shortly after—the Naḥal Ḥever scrolls, the Greek uncial codices, and texts that contain the Samaritan Pentateuch—reflect this type of reading.

## 3.0. Experiential and Propositional Knowledge

We may draw a meaningful connection between the spectrum outlined above and some recent proposals in Cognitive studies. Vervaeke et. al. (2009) have argued for the importance of relevance realisation for various problems of cognition. The heart of relevance realisation is "to be able to usefully ignore information in a contextually sensitive manner so as to enable our actions" (Vervaeke and Ferraro 2013, 28). Stated positively, managing information flow—and thereby not being overwhelmed by combinatorial explosion when trying to act in the world—involves discerning patterns. Patterns between events afford us *procedural* knowledge ('knowing how'); causal patterns between facts afford us *propositional* knowledge ('knowing that'); and the relationship between patterns and facts affords us *perspectival* knowledge ('knowing what it is like') (Vervaeke and Ferraro 2013, 29–30). A fourth type of knowing is *participatory*, how "nature's unfolding truth emerges only with the active participation of the human mind" (Tarnas 2010, 434). Another way to think about this final type of knowledge is the level of understanding achieved when one is able to integrate a piece of information into one's worldview (see Lazic 2021, 7).

Although philosophical debates rage concerning the nature of understanding (Baumberger et. al. 2017), one aspect, of course, is the integration of all these types of knowledge (Lazic 2021, 7). In the context of reading traditions the different traditions seemingly attempt to achieve understanding by initially engaging one of these types. Those traditions that afford the listener an *experience* engage the perspectival types of knowledge

(e.g., knowing *what it was like* to be the seer when he received the Veda and *what it was like* to hear the angel Gabriel deliver the suras), with the assumption that consciousness of this knowledge will manifest itself in speech and action (hence the value of meditative practices). Those that facilitate *understanding* engage the propositional, with the result that a proper understanding may then be applied and give rise to the other types of knowledge.

The fundamental thesis of this article is that the poetic accents, the accents of the Three Books, are *not* primarily intended to convey propositional knowledge. A fine-grained exegetical analysis (representing propositional knowledge) diverges from the interpretation presented by the accents, suggesting that the accents have a different purpose from (primarily) preserving and conveying propositional knowledge. Our hypothesis is that there was a shift in the accents as *reading* aid to the accents as *chanting* aid, a shift which was for some reason exaggerated in the Three Books. It is in the nature of chanting, then, that we seek a set of priorities that diverge from those of propositional knowledge.

## 4.0. Data and Analysis

Masoretic scholars have derived detailed rules about how the accents work, both in the prose and poetic systems. The most distinctive feature about the poetic accents is how often they 'break the rules', or how often the rules are "not put into effect because of very precise rules of transformation" (Dotan 2007, 640). In such *transformations*, expected disjunctive accents are replaced by conjunctive accents. Traditional understanding of

the transformations has been that they thereby accommodate musical needs: too many disjunctive accents would be less musical, so regular rules were applied in certain environments to replace disjunctive accents with conjunctive accents, making the reading more amenable to musical intent. The 'musical' intent of the transformations we here align with 'chanting' aid.

This study hypothesises that pursuing the application of these rules for transformation may reveal the distinctive purpose of the poetic accent system. Two kinds of environments will be addressed: (1) conjunctive accents present in *accordance* with expected transformations; and (2) conjunctive accents present in *contrast* to expected transformations. In both environments, the analysis will focus on the relationship between the exegetical analysis (*propositional* knowledge) and the effect of the conjunctive accents in the verses (seeking possible *experiential* knowledge). Exegetical analysis will deal extensively with linguistic prominence.

## 4.1. Linguistic Prominence

Linguistic prominence tends to fall into the category of either theme, topic, or focus. Thematic prominence confirms the larger concerns of the author, connecting this passage with those larger concerns. Topical prominence makes explicit the current concern of the author. Focal prominence makes explicit the main concern of the current clause. In many of the following examples, the effect of an additional prosodic break will be to suggest a kind of prominence, according to one of these categories.

(1a) יוֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׂחָק
'The one enthroned in heaven laughs.' (Ps. 2.4, rendered without prominence)

When focal prominence is the intent, as is often the case with fronted constituents, one might gloss the effect in English with a cleft structure, as *it is [fronted constituent] that [verb]*. In the case of Ps. 2.4, focal prominence could be rendered as *it is the one enthroned in heaven who laughs*. The purpose would be to identify *who* is the one who is laughing.

If topical prominence is the intent, as is also often the case with fronted subjects, one might gloss the effect as *as for [fronted subject], it [verb]*. If Ps. 2.4 were rendered with topical prominence, it would be *as for the one enthroned in heaven, he laughs*. There is no need in this case to identify the one enthroned in heaven, for this participant is already known. The question is, instead: what about the one enthroned in heaven? What does he do?

Lastly, when thematic prominence is in view, there is no gloss for the immediate clause to render the prominence, precisely because it identifies the topic of the larger passage rather than the immediate clause, and it prompts the reader to ensure he is reading the entire passage within the right context of this theme. If Ps. 2.4 were to be considered as encoding thematic prominence, it would indicate that the entire section of the psalm is about *the one enthroned in heaven*, in contrast to other themes (e.g., others enthroned elsewhere, or an event before or after the enthronement in heaven). The purpose of thematic

prominence is on a larger scale than focal and topical prominence, for it refers to entire sections of the text.

(1b) יוֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׂחָק

'*It is* the one enthroned in heaven *who* laughs.' (Ps. 2.4, rendered with focal prominence)

'*As for* the one enthroned in heaven, he laughs.' (Ps. 2.4, rendered with topical prominence)

'The one enthroned in heaven laughs *[and N.B. that he is the theme of the larger section]*.' (Ps. 2.4, rendered with thematic prominence)

## 4.2. Poetic Peaks and Accent Level

In an extensive exegetical (linguistic, literary, and poetic) analysis carried out for a handful of Psalms (Pss 1–6), the poetic peaks (points of prominence within each psalm) have been found to correlate with the levels of embedding within the accent system. That is, nearly every verse has accents from levels I (*siluq*), II (*revia*ʿ *mugrash*, *ʾatnaḥ*, and/or *ʿole ve-yored*), and III (*deḥi*, *revia*ʿ, and *tsinor*). Many poetic verses have no accents from domain IV (*pazer* and *legarme*), however. Poetic peaks tend to correlate with instances of accents from level IV.[153]

When transformations are disregarded, the correlation is even higher. That is, without transformations, the poetic accents (in terms of how many domains are employed) seem motivated

[153] Whereas the length of the verse would normally be the primary factor in the number of accent levels present, poetic prominence seems to override this at times, e.g., Ps. 2.2, 5, 8.

by concerns very similar to those of poetic and literary prominence. With transformations, however, the correlation drops. The motivation for the transformations does *not* align with the concerns of poetic and literary prominence. This misalignment is the focus of the present analysis.

A working hypothesis is that the greater the number of hierarchical levels employed, the more nuanced the intonation of a given verse. The more nuanced the intonation, the more readily prominence may be noted.[154] There will be no direct correspondence between specific accents and prominence noted, but rather a density of nested accents, which is taken to reflect intonational contour and interest, and thus correlate with the possibility of prominence.

## 4.3. Expected Transformations

### 4.3.1. Psalm 2

(1a) יוֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׂחָק
'The one enthroned in heaven laughs' (Ps. 2.4)

The domain of *ʾatnaḥ* (domain II) would normally be divided by a *deḥi* (domain III), but the expected *deḥi* is here transformed into conjunctive *munaḥ*. The result is that the *one enthroned in heaven* receives no intonational prominence. This may be compared to the prose example in (2), in which the first constituent

[154] Because poetic verses vary in length far less than prose verses, we disregard verse length as a factor. This was prompted by observations such as those above in fn. 153.

is also fronted (presumably as topic) and *also* set off by a strong disjunctive accent (*zaqef gadol*).

(2) וְהָעָ֕ם לֹ֥א יַעֲל֖וּ עִמּֽוֹ׃
'And as for the people, they shall not go up with him.' (Exod. 24.2)

Without the transformation from a disjunctive to a conjunctive accent, the *one enthroned in heaven* would potentially receive, as noted above, either focal, topical, or thematic prominence. In the context, focal prominence would be infelicitous; there is no assumption that someone is laughing, with a need to identify *who* is laughing. Topical prominence would require that the idea of *one enthroned in heaven* was already available and expected, with the clause now addressing this topic. A combination of topical and thematic prominence seems most likely, as both announcing the (new) topic of this clause as well as indicating the theme of this section: the one enthroned in heaven, in contrast to those of vv. 1–2, those enthroned on earth.

In linguistic and exegetical terms, therefore, the *munaḥ* diminishes the topical and thematic prominence of the one enthroned in heaven, lessening the explicit contrast between the kings of vv. 1–2 enthroned on *earth* and the king of vv. 3–4, who is enthroned in *heaven*. The implicit contrast remains, of course, but there is one less reinforcing echo of it within the text.

This compares with an exegetical analysis of Psalm 2, which finds the psalm fundamentally to be the interaction between earthly rulers and the heavenly king. The topical and thematic prominence of the heavenly king are therefore paramount to the purpose of the psalm.

### 4.3.2. Psalm 3

(3) אֵ֤ין יְשׁוּעָתָ֨ה ל֪וֹ בֵֽאלֹהִ֡ים סֶֽלָה׃
'There is no salvation in God for him. Selah.' (Ps. 3.3b)

This verse contains many oddities. The presence of transformations is roundly recognised as expected, and there is no doubt that multiple transformations have taken place, with the effect of removing all prosodic breaks apart from the *siluq*. Without transformations, both ל֪וֹ and בֵֽאלֹהִ֡ים would bear disjunctives (e.g., Wickes 1881, 69; Breuer 1989, 297; Price 2010, 181). As the poetic accentuation stands, each has a conjunctive, and יְשׁוּעָתָ֨ה stands out as bearing the rare *shalshelet qeṭana*.[155]

The prosodic effect is to remove natural stress from the end of the nuclear clause (אֵ֤ין יְשׁוּעָתָ֨ה) plus tightly bound constituent (preposition with exclusively pronominal object, ל֪וֹ), as well as any natural stress from the end of the entire clause short of the *selah*. A modern reader might dramatise this verse, imagining the derision and mockery with which the original speakers delivered it. In contrast, the MT accentuation neutralises even the syntactic structure. The entire clause and the *selah* are run together as a single undifferentiated prosodic unit.

The reverse of neutralising happens, however, with יְשׁוּעָתָ֨ה, if we grant with Price that the *shalshelet qeṭana* attaches special meaning to its passage. Psalm 3 might be exegetically summarised as poetic reversal: from enemies rising up against David

[155] Price (2010, 242) further supposes that the accent attaches some special meaning to the passages in which it occurs. By Price's (241, 300) count, this accent occurs only eight times in the Hebrew Bible.

and claiming that God has no salvation in store for him (vv. 1–2) to God rising up against David's enemies, with David declaring that God has great salvation for him (vv. 8–9). The centre section is how David progressed from the beginning to the end, namely calling upon the Lord to be his defence. Any special meaning from the *shalshelet qeṭana* would readily converge with an exegetical reading, in which the question of whether or not God has salvation in store for David is the crux of the psalm.

In this case, whereas the transformations diminish some exegetical nuance (even obscuring the syntax), the *shalshelet qeṭana* possibly retains or even increases another exegetical nuance (in the thematic role of יְשׁוּעָתָה).

### 4.3.3. Psalm 6

In Psalm 6, again, the transformations that take place blur what are otherwise significant poetic features within the Psalms. The exegetically significant reversal that grounds the psalm appears between verses 3 and 11.

(4) חָנֵּנִי יְהוָה֮ כִּי אֻמְלַל אָנִי רְפָאֵנִי יְהוָה כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ עֲצָמָי׃
'Be gracious to me, LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, LORD, for my bones have become dismayed!' (Ps. 6.3)

(5) יֵבֹשׁוּ ׀ וְיִבָּהֲלוּ מְאֹד כָּל־אֹיְבָי
'May all my enemies be ashamed and greatly dismayed!' (Ps. 6.11a).

Whereas in v. 3 the psalm's author is greatly dismayed (נִבְהֲלוּ), in v. 11 it is the enemies who are ashamed and dismayed (וְיִבָּהֲלוּ). By v. 11, the author's troubles have been resolved and lament gives way to rejoicing.

In (5) the accents reflect three levels. *ʾAtnaḥ*'s (אֹיְבֶֽי) domain is divided by *deḥi* (מֵאֹד) and *deḥi*'s domain is divided by *mahpakh legarme* (| יֵבֹֽשׁוּ).

Figure 1: Visualisation of accent hierarchy in Ps. 6.11

| **Domain of *ʾatnaḥ*** | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Domain of *deḥi* | |
| | | Domain of *mapakh legarmeh* |
| כָּל־אֹיְבָֽי | וְיִבָּהֲלוּ מְאֹד | יֵבֹֽשׁוּ \| |

This contrasts with (4), in which the *munaḥ* on the word נִבְהֲלוּ is a transformed *reviaʿ mugrash*, since only one of the two syllables between the accented syllables of נִבְהֲלוּ and עֶצְמִֽי contains a full vowel (Wickes 1881, 69; Breuer 1989, 300; Price 2010, 181). Had נִבְהֲלוּ contained its full accent, it would have exhibited a similar level of embedding to that of (5). This entails recognising that the presence of both *ʿole ve-yorēd* and *ʾatnaḥ* in 6.3 create both their own domains and an effectively *additional* domain, at the same level as *ʾatnaḥ*, below labelled 'from *ʾatnaḥ* to *siluq*'.[156]

[156] *Reviaʿ mugrash* cannot be said to be at the same level as *ʿole ve-yorēd* and *ʾatnaḥ*. Wickes (1881, 66) calls it simply a "foretone" and Price (2010, 164) insists it is simply the "near" disjunctive in the last line of a tricolon. For Breuer (1989, 245), *reviaʿ mugrash* is part of the class of "additional disjunctives" (מפסיקים נוספים) that, while not of the same rank as *ʾatnaḥ*, puzzlingly, have no rank at all (214). In any case, either *ʾatnaḥ* divides the domain to the left of *ʿole ve-yorēd*, or they both divide the domain of *siluq* into three domains; in either case, *reviaʿ mugrash* divides to the left of *ʾatnaḥ* (245).

Figure 2: Additional domain effectively created from accents *ʿole ve-yorēd* and *ʾatnaḥ*, when *ʿole ve-yorēd* and *ʾatnaḥ* are taken as being of equal rank

| ***Siluq*** | | |
|---|---|---|
| (From *ʾatnaḥ* to *siluq*) | *ʾatnaḥ* | *ʿOle ve-yorēd* |
| כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ עֲצָמָי | רְפָאֵנִי יְהוָה | חָנֵּנִי יְהוָה כִּי אֻמְלַל |

Figure 3: Additional domains effectively created from accents *ʿole ve-yorēd* and *ʾatnaḥ*, when *ʾatnaḥ* is considered a lesser domain than *ʿole ve-yorēd*

| ***Siluq*** | | |
|---|---|---|
| (From *ʿole ve-yorēd* to *siluq)* | | *ʿOle ve-yorēd* |
| (From *ʾatnaḥ* to *siluq*) | *ʾatnaḥ* | |
| כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ עֲצָמָי | רְפָאֵנִי יְהוָה | חָנֵּנִי יְהוָה כִּי אֻמְלַל |

If this additional domain is recognised, it provides a complete hierarchy within which to understand the accents. *Siluq* would then simultaneously 'govern' the domain of the entire verse *and also* a smaller domain, left over after *ʾatnaḥ* (and/or *ʿole ve-yorēd*) were taken into account.

This would change the usual 'levels' of the accents, as the 'near' and 'far' accents would be understood differently: the 'far' to create both domains of their own *as well as* a final domain, between themselves and their own governing accent, the 'near' subordinate to that new, additional domain.

Figure 4: Near and Far Accents understood at different levels

| **Parent Accent (e.g., *siluq*)** | | |
|---|---|---|
| (From far accent to parent) | | Far (e.g., *ʿole ve-yorēd)* |
| (From near to parent) | Near (e.g., *reviaʿ mugrash*) | |
| יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה: | וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יֶהְגֶּה | חֶפְצוֹ |

With this understanding, the number of levels in Ps. 6.11 would then be similar to those in Ps. 6.3. Each verse contains three levels, represented by the three shades of grey.

Figure 5: Ps. 6.3b's accent hierarchy presented visually, understanding *munach* as a transformed *reviaʿ mugrash*

| ***Siluq*** | | |
|---|---|---|
| (From *ʾatnaḥ* to *siluq*) | | *ʾatnaḥ* |
| | *munaḥ* > *reviaʿ mugrash* | |
| עַצְמָי | כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ | רְפָאֵנִי יְהוָה |

The similar level of embedding indicates a similarity in intonation contour for the two phrases, establishing a prosodic echo of sorts, which would reinforce the poetic feature here: these verses echo one another (albeit with a reversal). In verse 3, the king is in deep dismay, and in verse 11 the enemies experience deep dismay. The shift is from the king's to the enemies' suffering.

The essential point is that this prosodic similarity, reinforcing the exegetically significant thematic prominence, is lost by means of the transformations. With the *munaḥ* chanted as a true conjunctive accent, there is no longer a prosodic connection between verses 3 and 11. Any former exegetical connection is thereby removed.

Figure 6: Visualisation of accent hierarchy in Ps. 6.3b, with the *munaḥ* (a transformed *reviaʿ mugrash*) retained as a conjunctive

| ***Siluq*** | |
|---|---|
| (From *ʾatnaḥ* to *siluq*) | *ʾatnaḥ* |
| כִּי נִבְהֲלוּ עַצְמָי | רְפָאֵנִי יְהוָה |

Transformations also occur in verses 6 and 8:

(6) כִּ֤י אֵ֣ין בַּמָּ֣וֶת זִכְרֶ֑ךָ
'For in death there is no mention of you.' (Ps. 6.6a)

(7) עָשְׁשָׁ֣ה מִכַּ֣עַס עֵינִ֑י
'My eyes have wasted away from vexation.' (Ps. 6.8a)

In both instances, the accent appearing before the final word is a transformed *deḥi*, most likely since the final syllables in מָּ֣וֶת and כַּ֣עַס do not constitute their own feet on the level of metrical parsing.[157] With and without transformations, the accent pattern for Ps. 6.6a would be as follows:

Figure 7: Accent hierarchy in Ps. 6.6a, with transformations: understanding *munaḥ* as a transformed *deḥi*

| ***ʾatnaḥ*** | |
|---|---|
| | *munach* > *deḥi* |
| זִכְרֶ֑ךָ | כִּ֤י אֵ֣ין בַּמָּ֣וֶת |

Figure 8: Accent hierarchy in Ps. 6.6a, without transformations: keeping *munaḥ* as a conjunctive

| ***ʾatnaḥ*** |
|---|
| כִּ֤י אֵ֣ין בַּמָּ֣וֶת זִכְרֶ֑ךָ |

With and without transformations, the accent pattern for Ps. 6.8a would be:

Figure 9: Accent hierarchy in Ps. 6.8a, with transformations: understanding *munaḥ* as a transformed *deḥi*

| ***ʾatnaḥ*** | |
|---|---|
| | *Munach* > *deḥi* |
| עֵינִ֑י | כִּ֤י אֵ֣ין בַּמָּ֣וֶת |

[157] On the metrical parsing of segolate nouns, see Khan (2020, I:423). On the transformation of *deḥi* before *ʾatnaḥ*, see Wickes (1881, 60, 75); Breuer (1989, 290); Price (2010, 202).

Figure 10: Accent hierarchy in Ps. 6.8a, without transformations: keeping *munaḥ* as a conjunctive

| ***ʾatnaḥ*** |
| --- |
| עָשְׁשָׁה מִכַּעַס עֵינִי |

The most common pattern within the poetic verses in Pss 1–6 has two levels: an *ʾatnaḥ* dividing a first time, and then another level of accents dividing the sections a second time. The presence of transformations in these two verses makes the verses stand out for having *less* intonational interest (fewer accent levels) than is standard.

This compares to the exegetical topography of the psalm, in that verses 7–8 are the poetic peak of the entire psalm, introduced by verse 6. Verses 6 and 8 thus flank the dramatic heart of the psalm, which is a poetic descent into Sheol. Poetic features abound in marking this section, from the absence of the divine name (set forth nearly programmatically in verse 6 as a definition of Sheol), the quantity of rare words (אַשְׁוֶה, עַרְשִׂי, אַמְסֶה, עָשְׁשָׁה, עָתְקָה), all appearing fewer than 10x each in the Hebrew Bible), the proliferation of figurative language (weary sighing, darkness of night, flood of tears causing the bed to float and melt, an eye wasting away), the only tricolon in the psalm (verse 7), and dense alliteration (of gutturals and sibilants).

Whereas the full arsenal of poetic techniques is employed to mark this section as prominent, the transformations remove even the possibility of prominence, rendering the introduction (verse 6) and end (verse 8) intonationally unremarkable. Once again, transformations seem to have ends other than exegetical nuance.

## 4.4. Unexpected Conjunctive Accents

### 4.4.1 Psalm 2

(8) יִתְיַצְּבוּ | מַלְכֵי־אֶֽרֶץ וְרוֹזְנִים נוֹסְדוּ־יָ֑חַד
'The earthly kings take their stand; princes take counsel together' (Ps. 2.2a)

Scholars disagree over how to analyse the accentuation of (8). Price (2010, 187) claims that a *revia*ʿ *gadol* may not serve as a lone disjunctive with *ʾatnaḥ*, but only as a remote disjunctive, alongside the near disjunctive *deḥi*. Its presence, therefore, requires a *deḥi* (which, if transformed, would become a *munaḥ*).[158]

In Ps. 2.2a, however, there is neither *deḥi* nor *munaḥ* that might represent a transformed *deḥi*. Even if the *merkha* somehow stood in for *munaḥ*, the transformation itself would not follow the other conventional conditions in which *deḥi* transforms: one word with a conjunctive must precede the word that would have been accentuated with *deḥi*.

Compare the following: on the right side of the table are verses in which the word preceding *ʾatnaḥ* is no doubt accentuated with a transformed *deḥi* (transformed into *munaḥ*); the left side of the table consists of situations similar to the one here, where the *merkha* between *revia*ʿ *gadol* and *ʾatnaḥ* is (supposedly) a true conjunctive, not a transformation.

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[158] Wickes (1881, 58) does permit the occurrence of *revia*ʿ *gadol* in place of *deḥi*, as a lone (near) disjunctive, and Breuer (1989, 248) admits that לפעמים יבוא רביע גדול במקום דחי '*Revia*ʿ *gadol* sometimes comes in place of *deḥi*.'

Table 1: Comparison of true conjunctives vs transformed conjunctives preceding *ʾatnaḥ*

| **No prosodic break** (*merkha* as a true conjunctive, not a transformation) | | **Prosodic break** (*munaḥ* as transformed *deḥi*, not a true conjunctive) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| אֶֽרֶץ וְרוֹזְנִים נוֹסְדוּ־יָחַד | Ps. 2.2 | כָּל־זֶ֭רַע יַעֲקֹ֣ב כַּבְּדֻ֑והוּ | Ps. 22.24 |
| וְהוּא יִשְׁפֹּט־תֵּבֵל בְּצֶדֶק | Ps. 9.9 | לְֽא־יַחְשֹׁ֣ב יְ֭הוָה לֹ֣ו עָ֑וֹן | Ps. 32.2 |
| הַשָּׁמַ֥יִם מְ֝סַפְּרִ֗ים כְּבֹ֣וד־אֵ֑ל | Ps. 19.2 | וְעַתָּ֥ה מַה־קִּוֵּ֥יתִי אֲדֹנָ֑י | Ps. 39.8 |
| אֶת־עַמְּךָ֥ וּבָ֝רֵ֗ךְ אֶת־נַחֲלָתֶֽךָ׃ | Ps. 28.9 | הֵאִ֤ירוּ בְרָקִ֨ים תֵּ֗בֵל | Ps. 77.19 |

This quandary is reflected in several medieval manuscripts that accent the word וְרוֹזְנִים with *deḥi* and the following word with *munaḥ*, viz., וְרוֹזְנִים נוֹסְדוּ (Ginsburg 1913, 2). The exegetical consequence is that the word וְרוֹזְנִים is given less prominence in the MT and more prominence in those manuscripts that accent with either *deḥi* or *munaḥ* (if understood as standing in for *deḥi*).

Our interest lies in the role of any possible prominence. If focal, one might gloss as *it is princes who take counsel together*. If topical, one might gloss as *as for princes, they take counsel together*. Finally, if thematic, the first section of the psalm should be considered to be *about princes (and their kind)*, presumably in contrast to what the rest of the psalm is about.

This final possibility, thematic prominence, rings true with an exegetical analysis of Psalm 2, already mentioned as the interaction between earthly rulers and the heavenly king. The heavenly king responds to the rebellion of the earthly rulers by installing on Zion his own king, who combines in himself characteristics of both earthly and divine kingship.[159]

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[159] The new king is physically on Zion (on earth), but aligns with the divine king in perspective and attitude (manner of addressing the rebels). Toward the end of the psalm, the identities of the two are blurred (verses 12a, the subject of יִאָנֵף, and 13, the referent of 'him' in חֹוסֵי בֹּו).

Those manuscripts that retain the prosodic break after וְרוֹזְנִים thus make grasping the structure of the psalm a little easier, because '(earthly) princes' are indicated as thematic at nearly the very beginning of the psalm. Those manuscripts that obscure the prosodic break provide no hint to the overall structure. As ever, the question is what would motivate a reading tradition that would detract, however slightly, from indicating the larger structure.

(9) יְהוָה אָמַר אֵלַי בְּנִי אַתָּה
'The LORD said to me "You are My Son"' (Ps. 2.7b).

The accentuation of this verse is strange. If *ʾatnaḥ* is served by two conjunctives, both are expected to be *munaḥ* (Breuer 1989, 288). This, however, is not the case here, where the accents are instead (*tsinoret-)merkha.* One reconstructed set of transformations would argue for a break on אֵלַי (between the matrix clause and reported speech),[160] and another for a break on בְּנִי (within the direct speech).[161]

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[160] This is the expected division in any verse containing a clause with a speech verb followed by reported speech (Shoshany 2022, 281). As Breuer (1989, 288 fn. 27) explains, this verse's accentuation without transformations would have been אָמַר אֵלַי בְּנִי אַתָּא. This division (with a disjunctive accent on אֵלַי) is attested in many late medieval MSS (Ginsburg 1913, 3). After applying transformation rules, we might have expected אָמַר אֵלַי בְּנִי־אַתָּה, including *maqef* replaced with a conjunctive. Indeed, this is the accentuation in Ginsburg's (1913, 3) edition.

[161] Price (2010, 204) argues that the *tsinoret-merkha* here serves as a transformed *deḥi*, with the break (if one is to be had) falling on the word בְּנִי, not אֵלַי. Although no late medieval MS reflects this reading, in Shoshany's (2020) sample of 141 instances of a matrix clause con-

By Price's (2010, 243) count, the combination *tsinoret-merkha* that binds the words אָמַר אֵלַי appears only eleven times: "The augmentation is not consistent throughout the text, but occurs in only these few instances, suggesting that *Sinnorit* in these cases may attach some special meaning to the passage."

The net result of the poetic accentuation, with *tsinoret-merkha* and an additional *merkha*, makes for no prosodic break after the יְהוָה, while the *tsinoret* may nonetheless attach 'some special meaning' to the passage.

From an exegetical perspective, this is a clear thematic peak, in which the chosen king (who will crush all rebellion) is identified and sanctioned. Verse 7 is the only tricolon in the poem (another indication of a poetic peak), and, in a doubly embedded direct speech, God speaks: but only as cited by the anointed king, not directly from his own mouth. If the Psalm already protects the speech of God by delivering it second-hand, the poetic accentuation removes all prosodic interest, drawing no attention at all to a clear exegetical peak.

## 4.5. Summary

In each of the examples from Psalms 2, 3 and 6, there are more conjunctive accents than accentuation rules would normally allow. Some are the result of transformations and others remain

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taining a speech verb followed by direct/reported speech, the Babylonian differed from the Tiberian system 36 times. In 30 of the occurrences, the Tiberian system divided *within* the direct/reported speech, not, as is generally considered felicitous, between the matrix and complement clause (284). Although this is clearly not the norm within these types of clauses, it may indirectly support Price's claim.

unexplained. In most cases, there are examples of manuscripts other than *Leningradensis* that reflect a version prior to transformations or simply with more expected accentuation. In each case, there is also the presence of some form of linguistic prominence, as derived from an exegetical study.

The working hypothesis was that an increasing number of divisions (and thus the number of hierarchical levels or domains employed) indicates a more nuanced intonation and correlation with linguistic prominence. The corollary is that the fewer divisions (the fewer disjunctives, and the more conjunctives), the less the signalling of linguistic prominence.

The observation is thus repeated that, in each of these examples, although linguistic prominence can be exegetically demonstrated and even aligns with some manuscripts or interpretations of transformations, the MT as it stands subverts expected linguistic prominence.

## 5.0. Conclusion

Little can be said with certainty, but the hints are tantalising. In the surveyed liturgical traditions, there were competing demands between preserving the sense of the text, as in propositional knowledge, and preserving an embodiment of the text, as in experiential knowledge. The one can be sacrificed for the sake of the other, as in Gregorian chant's almost deliberate obscuring of the meaning of the text.

The poetic accents can by no means be said to obscure the meaning of the text, but it can be said that the effect of transformations (with unexpected conjunctive accents) lessens the effect

of linguistic prominence, which would otherwise lead to a nuanced understanding of the text (especially in terms of themes and macro-structure).

The purpose for lessening this nuance can only be surmised, but the age-old understanding of the poetic accents as a chanting aid (even more so than a reading aid) suggests a possibility. The poetic accents may have willingly sacrificed an amount of exegetical nuance to make the text more amenable to liturgical reading, by which is understood reading such as that linked with regular cadence and rhythm *regardless of* the particular content. The regularity of liturgical reading that honours and preserves a sacred text may have been valued enough to be considered worth sacrificing some details of exegetical nuance.

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# THE PRONUNCIATION OF תִּזְכְּרוּ (NUM. 15.40) IN RABBINIC SOURCES AND IN LIGHT OF PHOENICIAN*

*Gary A. Rendsburg*

The breadth of our honouree's scholarship is truly astounding, though the one constant throughout his career has been the pronunciation of Hebrew in its various oral reading traditions, from his early article 'Vowel Length and Syllable Structure in the Tiberian Tradition' (Khan 1987) to the more recent and magisterial two-volume *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew* (Khan 2020). I am, accordingly, very happy to offer this small contribution on the subject to this *Festschrift* in honour of Geoffrey Khan, as a token of our friendship reaching back

* My thanks to the following colleagues for a thorough reading of the pre-final draft and many helpful suggestions: Vincent Beiler (my former MA student, now a recent Cambridge PhD under the tutelage of our honouree), Joshua Blachorsky (my former BA student, now a recent PhD from New York University), and Aaron Rubin (University of Georgia). In addition, both Josh and Vince provided yeoman assistance by tracking down some hard-to-find references in the Bobst Library and Cambridge University Library, respectively. Two additional colleagues are thanked for specific items in fns 12 and 37.

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to the 1990–1991 academic year, when we first met in Jerusalem.[1]

## 1.0. Num. 15.40 and the Ensuing Discussion in y. Berakhot 2.3 (4d)

Num. 15.40 reads as follows: לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ֙ וַעֲשִׂיתֶ֣ם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָ֔י וִהְיִיתֶ֥ם קְדֹשִׁ֖ים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶֽם׃ ‘so that you may remember, and you shall do all of my commandments, and you shall be holy unto your God’. Because this verse appears within the third paragraph of the traditional recitation of the *Shemaʿ* prayer (in both the Rabbinic and Karaite liturgies),[2] and because the second word was patient of mispronunciation (see anon), said word received particular attention throughout the ages, especially in the Rabbinic corpus of texts.

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[1] Geoffrey spent that year as a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies, while I was on sabbatical from my then home institution, Cornell University. Two young scholars, each pursuing his research at the National Library of Israel (then still known as the Jewish National and University Library) on the Givʿat Ram campus of the Hebrew University: naturally, it did not take us long to meet and share our academic interests with one another. From that point forward, עד היום הזה, our paths have continued to cross, always most fruitfully and collegially.

[2] Its presence in the Rabbinic liturgy is well-known. For its place in the Karaite liturgy, see https://opensiddur.org/compilations/liturgical/siddurim/karaite-prayer/karaite-siddur-for-weekdays-and-sabbaths/ (pp. 14, 40, 51, 76).

The earliest source is y. Berakhot 2.3 (4d), which reads as follows (according to MS Leiden [Scaliger 3], fol. 8a; see Figure 1, overleaf):[3]

> ר' לוי ר' אבדימא דחיפא בשם ר' לוי בר סיסי: צריך להתיז "למען תזכרו".
> ר' יונה בשם רב חסדא: צריך להתי(ס/ז) "כי לעולם חסדו".

> R. Levi, R. Avdima of Ḥaifa, in the name of R. Levi bar Sisi: one must articulate [the *zayin* in] *ləmaʿan tiżkərū*. R. Jonah in the name of R. Ḥisda: one must articulate [the *samekh* in] *kī lə-ʿōlɔm ḥasdō*.[4]

Per the title of this article, our main concern here is with the dictum צריך להתיז "למען תזכרו ‘one must articulate [the *zayin* in] *ləmaʿan tiżkərū*’.[5] As indicated by the conventional notation,

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[3] For ease of reading (here and below), I have added double inverted commas (quotation marks) around the quoted biblical passages, colon to offset the reciter(s) of the maxim from the maxim itself, and full stop (period) to indicate the end of a sentence. See the similar techniques used by Sussman (2001, 17).

[4] At various places in this article, including in the title, I include the Tiberian Masorah and/or transliteration reflecting such, for ease of reading and analysis, though the graphic representation of the oral reading tradition was not created for centuries after the time period under discussion here (that is, the early third century CE, when R. Levi bar Sisi lived).

[5] For brief comments on our passage, see Weinberg (1985, 138–39) and Miller (2006, 154–55). On the second dictum, see Guggenheimer (2000, 203, fn. 177), with reference to Frankel (1874, *ad loc.*), who called attention to the presence of the root חס"ד ‘shame, disgrace’, in the *paʿʿel* form, in various Aramaic dialects, (see, e.g., Sokoloff 2009, 474; 2014, 134): hence, one should be careful to recite חסדו ‘his kindness’ with sin-

the last letter on the second word in this phrase, להתי(ס/ז), is frustratingly unclear (see Figure 2), though see further below.

Figure 1: MS Leiden (Rome, 1289), fol. 8a (lns 10–11 from bottom).[6]

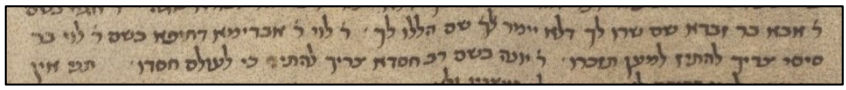

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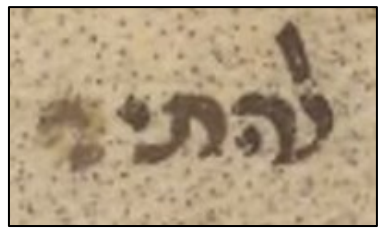
Figure 2: Close-up of להתי(ס/ז in MS Leiden, fol. 8a (ln. 10 from bottom)



## 1.1. Cairo Geniza Documents

For the record, note that two Cairo Geniza documents contain this passage, to wit, C.U.L. T-S F17.20 and C.U.L. T-S F17.7. The former reads as follows, with no significant variants when compared to the Leiden manuscript (see Figure 3, facing page):

> ר' לוי ר אבידימה דחיפא בש' ר' לוי בן סיסי: צריך להתיז "למען תזכרו".
> ר' יונה בש' רב חסדא: צריך להתיס[!] "כי לעולם חסדו".

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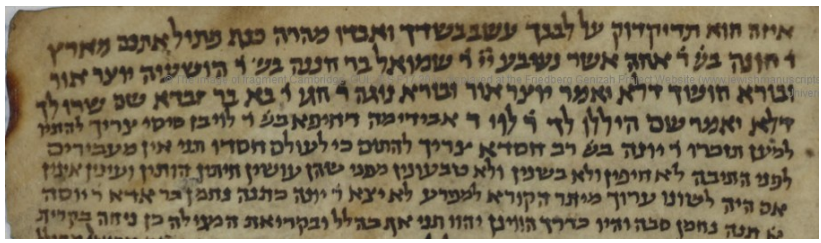
gle /s/, and not with double /ss/. One wonders if R. Ḥisda was particularly sensitive to the matter, given his name and the potential for mispronunciation.

[6] Manuscript available online at https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/937041.

Though I do take the opportunity to note what looks like a final *mem* on the word להתיס, one must perforce assume it to be a *samekh* (hence the exclamation mark in the above transcription), as an inspection of the following final *mem* in לעולם (and others on the page) and the following *samekh* in חסדו (and others on the page) makes clear.

Figure 3: C.U.L. T-S F17.20, fol. 1v (left) (FGP no. C97881) (see lns 4–5 for the relevant text)



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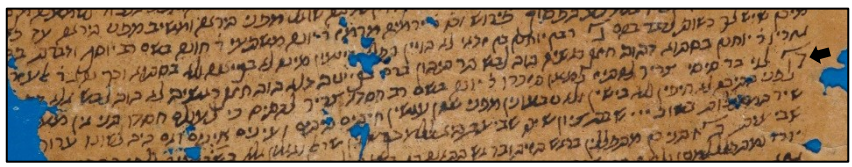
The second Cairo Geniza document is not a Talmud Yerushalmi manuscript *per se*, but rather one of the few extant manuscripts of Maimonides's *Hilkhot ha-Yerushalmi*, written, in fact, in his own hand (see Figure 4, overleaf). This document was published early on in the history of Geniza research by Louis Ginzberg in his well-known and path-finding book, *Yerushalmi Fragments from the Genizah* (1909, 29–36, esp. 31). The relevant passage once again provides no major textual variants:[7]

[7] Ginzberg (1909, 31) incorrectly wrote להתיז in the second instance, though the manuscript shows clearly להתיס. In the apparatus Ginzberg noted only the spelling חסדה instead of חסדא.

לוי בר סיסי: צריך להתיז "למען תזכרו". ר' יונה בשם רב חסדה: צריך להתיס "כי לעולם חסדו".

Note, however, the lack of the introductory formula, 'R. Levi, R. Avdima of Ḥaifa, in the name of…'—an issue of no major consequence, though it does point to the more digest-like nature of *Hilkhot ha-Yerushalmi* (as opposed to the full Talmud Yerushalmi text). As the title of his book makes clear, Ginzberg did not realise that he had before him a copy of the long-lost Maimonides, *Hilkhot ha-Yerushalmi*, nor of course could he have known at that early stage of Cairo Geniza research that the document was in fact written by the great sage himself. The true identity of T-S F17.7—both its contents and its handwriting—were determined only later, during the 1940s, by Saul Lieberman and Morris Lutzki, based on philological and palaeographical analysis, respectively.[8]

Figure 4: C.U.L. T-S F17.7, fol. 2r (FGP no. C97850) (the arrow points to line 42 of the manuscript page, commencing with the large ד to indicate the new *halakha* section)



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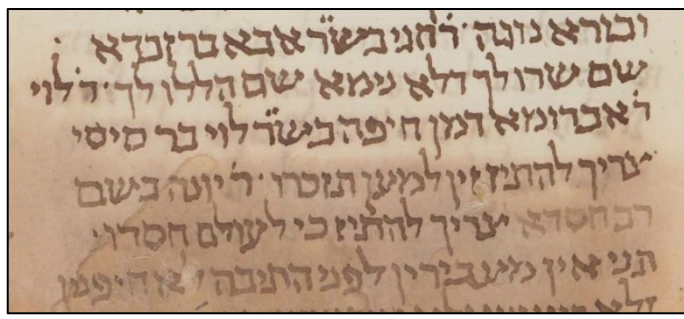
[8] For further details, see Hopkins (1983, 277–82).

## 1.2. Additional Textual Witnesses

None of the textual witnesses collated by Peter Schäfer and Hans-Jürgen Becker in their *Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi* (1991, 58–59) contain any major deviations from the wording in the Leiden manuscript or the Cairo Geniza documents.

That said, there are some interesting variant readings worthy of citation here. For example, to add greater clarification to the key statement by R. Levi bar Sisi, two sixteenth-century Eretz-Israel manuscripts, namely, MS BnF hebr. 1389 (see Figure 5) and MS BL Or. 2822 (see Figure 6, overleaf), both add the letter name זין after להתיז, so that one reads "צריך להתיז זין "למען תזכרו ‘one must articulate the *zayin* in *ləmaʿan tizkərū*’ (using the same translation as above, though now with the brackets removed, since the letter *zayin* is expressly stated).

Figure 5: MS Bibliothèque nationale de France hébr. 1389 (Safed, 1542), fol. 17r[9] (bottom half of the right-hand column)



Used with permission granted by the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[9] See https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10539966n. Note that the manuscript includes the important commentary of Solomon ben Joseph Sirillo (d. c. 1558), perhaps as autograph (or at least in part).

Figure 6: MS British Library Or. 2822 (sixteenth century, Safed/Jerusalem), fol. 44r[10] (bottom half of the right-hand column)

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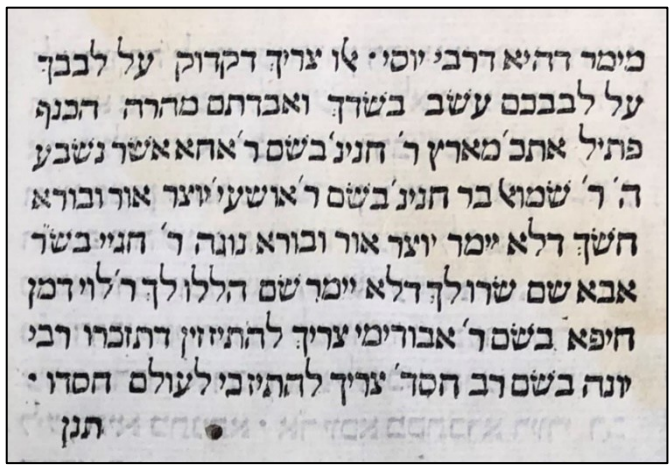
This reading, with the addition of the letter name זין, clearly must have been 'in the air' within Talmudic scholarship in the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries, for it also finds its way into the printed edition of the Talmud Yerushalmi, Seder Zeraʿim (selected tractates), in the work known as *Śede Yehoshuaʿ* (Constantinople, 1662): צריך להתיז זין דתזכרו 'one must articulate the *zayin* of *tizkərū*' (see Figure 7, facing page).[11]

[10] Current numbering is fol. 44r, per the digital presentation at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_2822. Using the old numbering system, Schäfer and Becker list this folio as p. 38. This manuscript also includes the important commentary of Solomon ben Joseph Sirillo (d. c. 1558), perhaps as autograph (or at least in part).

[11] For a description of this early printing, see Schäfer and Becker (1991, xii).

Figure 7: The Gemara section of *Śede Yehoshuaʿ* (Constantinople, 1662), fol. 15b, with our passage on the next-to-last line.[12]



We also may take the opportunity to note MS Vatican ebr. 133, which is riddled with mistakes at this point in the manuscript (see Figure 8, overleaf).[13] Note, for example, תזיפה for דחיפה, להתין for להתיז, and שכרו for תזכרו—all meaningless, but also all understandable misreadings, given the letter forms.

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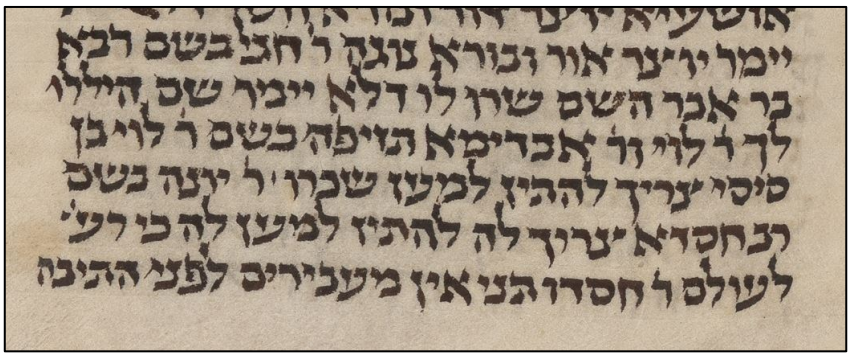
[12] My thanks to David Selis, Leon Charney Doctoral Fellow, Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, Yeshiva University, for taking this photo of the relevant page from the copy of *Śede Yehoshuaʿ* held by Special Collections at the Mendel Gottesman Library, Yeshiva University (New York), with the shelfmark Strauss Collection, no. 5461.

[13] In fact, this is true of the entire manuscript: in the words of Ginzberg (1909, vi): הוא מלא שבושים לאלפים 'it is filled with errors unto the thousands'—though as with every manuscript, there are valuable readings nonetheless (though none in our section), which moved Ginzberg to create a listing of such potentially helpful variants on pp. 345–72. See further Richler, Beit-Arié, and Pasternak (2008, 95–96).

Figure 8: MS Vatican ebr. 133 (Ashkenaz, c. 1400), fol. 29r[14]



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## 2.0. The Root of the Verb להתיז

Thus far, then, the basic statement from y. Berakhot 2.3 (4d), along with its presentation in Maimonides, *Hilkhot ha-Yerushalmi*, have been presented. The next issue to address is the key verb להתיז (and the follow-up verb להתיס): what is its root and what is its meaning? The answer to the second question is relatively easy, as the connotation may be garnered from the context: to distinguish the /z/ sound (and to distinguish the /s/ sound)—in short, 'enunciate, articulate'. But what of the first question: from what root might this verb derive?

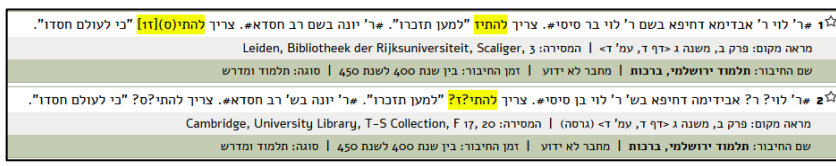
From the strict view of morphology, two roots are possible: נת"ז and תו"ז. The former is relatively well attested in Rabbinic Hebrew (RH), including in Tannaitic texts, with the meanings 'splash' (*qal*) (e.g., m. Makhshirin 5.2), 'spurt, squirt' (*nifʿal*) (e.g., m. Ḥullin 6.6), 'cut off, decapitate' (*hifʿil*) (e.g., m. Sanhedrin

[14] Available online at https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ebr.133.

7.3).[15] And while it is difficult to see the semantic extension from these meanings to ‘enunciate, articulate’, Marcus Jastrow (1903, 2:943), for one, included this meaning (from Amoraic Hebrew, with our passage the only attestation) with those above in the same dictionary entry.

A different tack was taken by the scholars at the Academy of the Hebrew Language, for *Ma’agarim* lists our word להתיז under the root ת"ז, with our passage as the only attestation thereof (see Figure 9).[16] This analysis, of course, implies that our word is a neologism or nonce word—eminently suitable to the singular purpose of R. Levi bar Sisi (and in his wake R. Ḥisda, with slight alteration from להתיז to להתיס).

Figure 9: Results of the search for the root ת"ז at *Ma’agarim* (https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/)




Above I used the expression “from the strict view of morphology,” if only to observe that in theory at least a third root is possible, namely ת"ז (“in theory,” because the *hifʿil* infinitive construct of this root would be להתז, not להתיז).[17] This verbal root occurs once in the Bible, in the expression וְאֶת־הַנִּטְשׁוֹת הֵסִיר הֵתֵז

[15] For a complete survey, see Moreshet (1980, 236–37). For additional insights into the root, see Bar-Asher (2014, 307, 331, 337, fn. 57).

[16] A search under the root ת"ס reveals the same two passages, with attention to the comment by R. Jonah in the name of R. Ḥisda.

[17] See, e.g., Segal (1927, 89); Blau (2010, 310).

'and the branches, remove and lop off' (Isa. 18.5).[18] This usage clearly anticipates the aforementioned RH *hifʿil* of נת"ז 'cut off, decapitate', though we must also posit the interchange of I-*n* (פ"נ) and geminate (ע"ע) verbs, as observed by scholars previously.[19] Once again, though, one is hard pressed to imagine the semantic extension from any of the meanings of תז"ז or נת"ז applicable to the statement of R. Levi bar Sisi.[20]

## 2.1. The Noun תזיז 'wasp, hornet'

There is one more lead which we need to follow, namely, the noun תזיז 'wasp, hornet', which occurs a single time in ancient Hebrew (*DCH* 8:617), to wit, in ותזיז לא יעשה דבש 'and the wasp/hornet shall not make honey' (4QpsEzek[b] [4Q386] f1ii.5).[21] Quite possibly, the noun תזיז is an onomatopoetic creation, evoking the sound of the buzzing produced by these members of the

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[18] BDB (1064); *HALOT* (2:1715); *DCH* (8:617). For discussion, see Greenspahn (1984, 166). Of course, one would expect 'lop off' to precede 'remove', and, in fact, some translations adjust the rendering accordingly. Thus, for example, Alter (2019, 2:680): 'lop off, take away the slack branches'.

[19] See, e.g., *HALOT* (2:1715); and in greater detail Moreshet (1980, 237 fn. 45*).

[20] Unless I have missed the information somewhere, there appears to be no discussion of להתיז in the *ʿArukh*, per Kohut (1926). One would expect to find such in one of the following places: 3:250 (s.v. התזה), 5:397 (s.v. נתז), 8:212 (s.v. תזז); but y. Berakhot 2.3 (4d) makes no appearance in any of these entries.

[21] For discussion, see Dimant (1998, 513, 516) and Bar-Asher (2012, 150–51).

*Apocrita* suborder. If such be the case, might this be the source of R. Levi bar Sisi's nonce word להתיז 'enunciate, articulate', with special attention to the proper voiced sibilant pronunciation of the sound /z/ in the word תִּזְּכְּרוּ (Num. 15.40)? With no other promising lead, I am inclined to think so.

## 2.2. The Aramaic Verbal Root נת"ז

A survey of the Semitic languages reveals only one cognate to any of the proposed roots, namely, Aramaic נת"ז, used in three Targumic renderings, including Targum Onqelos to Deut. 1.44 (Cook 2008, 184), as follows:[22]

| | |
|---|---|
| MT | וַיִּרְדְּפוּ אֶתְכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂינָה הַדְּבֹרִים |
| | 'and they will pursue you, as bees do' |
| Tg.O. | וּרדַפוּ יָתְכוֹן כְּמָא דְּנָתְזָן דַּבְרַיָתָא |
| | 'and they will pursue you, as bees swarm' |

Note how the basic verb עָשָׂה 'do' is glossed with the rarer and more technical נְתַז 'swarm' (per the context). In theory, this meaning could be related to the RH verb 'splash, spurt, squirt', though I am inclined to see it as an independent verb. Most strikingly, this Aramaic verb connects to the aforementioned Hebrew noun תזיז 'wasp, hornet', once again with onomatopoetic resonance.

For the record, the other two instances within the Targumim more closely correspond to the different RH connotations, with Job 3.24 meaning 'spurt, squirt' (with reference to water)

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[22] The Targum Onqelos version is taken from Sperber (2004, 948 [= 1:291]), with the Babylonian vocalisation marks converted to their Tiberian equivalents (see also at *CAL*).

and with 1 Chron. 10.9 meaning ‘cut off’ (with reference to the Philistines decapitating Saul).

### 2.3. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*

I end this section of the article with one further observation: no doubt due to the rareness and opacity of the term להתיז, when Maimonides wrote his *Mishneh Torah* (Code of Jewish Law), with its aim of a simple and accessible Hebrew, he opted for a much more basic Hebrew verb, stating simply: וצריך לבאר זַיִ"ן שלתזכרו ‘and one must pronounce clearly the *zayin* of *tizkərū*’ (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Bodleian MS Huntington 80, fol. 95v, ln. 5 (Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Qeri’at Shemaʿ 2.9)[23]

Used with kind permission of the Bodleian Libraries, Oxford.

## 3.0. Sibilant Interchange

The foregoing excursion into the identification of the root of להתיז is only the forecourt to the discussion adumbrated in the title of this article. Hence, we now move to the pronunciation issue. As many scholars have recognised, the issue with תִּזְכְּרוּ (Num. 15.40) was the devoicing of the voiced sibilant /z/ at the onset of the voiceless velar /k/, “due to partial regressive assimilation”

[23] See https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/60f5a5d4-8e17-457a-8280-0e0fdd43a1b6/.

(Kutscher 1965, 30), so that תִּזְכְּרוּ *tizkərū* would be realised as תִּסְכְּרוּ *tiskərū*. Such is noted already by the early grammarians, such as Jonah ibn Janaḥ (1856, 144) and David Qimḥi (1862, 72b), in their basic phonological discussions.[24]

## 3.1. The Verbal Root שׂכ"ר 'earn'

According to later medieval rabbinic sources, which codify the instruction from y. Berakhot 2.3 (4d), and then comment upon it, the main concern is that the devoicing of the *zayin* in למען תזכרו *ləmaʿan tizkərū* would yield a pronunciation identical to that of למען תשכרו *lemaʿan tiśkərū*, with the resultant meaning 'so that you will earn', as if people would recite the *Shemaʿ* for the goal of worldly earnings. In the words of R. Jacob ben Asher (ca 1269–ca 1343), author of the *ʾArbaʿa Ṭurim*: והוי כעבדים המשמשים את הרב ע"מ לקבל פרס 'and be like workers who serve the master in order to receive their salary' (ʾOraḥ Ḥayyim 61.17).

## 3.2. The Verbal Root שׁק"ר 'lie'

Another concern, less likely, though possible, is that the mispronunciation of למען תזכרו *ləmaʿan tizkərū* could lead to the sense of למען תשקרו *ləmaʿan tišqərū* 'so that you will lie'—produced through an alternative sibilant interchange (along with velar interchange between /k/ and /q/). Once again, in the words of R. Jacob ben Asher: דלא לישתמע תשקרו 'so that it does not sound like *tišqərū*' (ʾOraḥ Ḥayyim 61.17).

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[24] The latter is summarised in Chomsky (1952, 11, fn. b); see also Bacher (1895, 6, fn. 6).

### 3.3. The Verbal Root סכ"ר ‘dam up, stop up’

And then there is a third concern, which in fact may be the most likely, that the devoicing of the /z/ in למען תזכרו *ləmaʿan tiẓkərū* would produce למען תסכרו *ləmaʿan tiskərū*, derived from the root סכ"ר ‘dam up, stop up’, the relatively rare Biblical Hebrew verb, but well known from וַיִּסָּכְרוּ֙ מַעְיְנֹ֣ת תְּה֔וֹם וַֽאֲרֻבֹּ֖ת הַשָּׁמָ֑יִם ‘and the fountains of the deep and the openings of the heaven were stopped up’ (Gen. 8.2).[25] True, the result is essentially the same as למען תשכרו *ləmaʿan tiśkərū* discussed above, but now the sense is that the reciting of the *Shemaʿ* would create a stoppage or a damming up of God’s commandments.[26]

To the best of my knowledge, only one early rabbinic commentator expressed this concern, namely, the little-known R. Manoaḥ of Narbonne.[27] So little is known of R. Manoaḥ that we can only estimate his dates: end of the thirteenth century / first half of the fourteenth century. He is best (or perhaps only) known for his commentary on Maimonides’s *Mishneh Torah*, which scholars designate as *Sefer ha-Menuḥa*, though in truth we have no real evidence for the name of the work. A portion of this composition was published (Constantinople, 1718 / Pressburg, 1879), though not the section dealing with the laws of reading the *Shemaʿ*. For

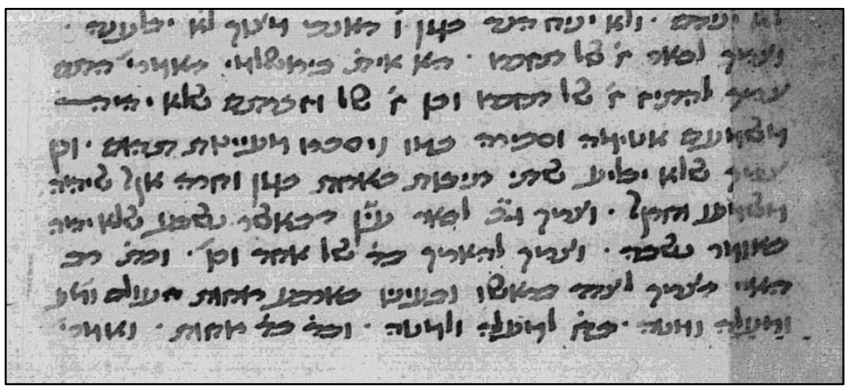
[25] The verb also occurs in סכרי שמין בעבכי ‘bolt up the heavens in your cloud’ (Deir ʿAlla 1.6), spoken by the gods addressing feminine Šemeš (Aḥituv 2008, 446–47).

[26] See Guggenheimer (2000, 203) for a summary of all the options presented here.

[27] For a brief summary of his life and work, see Havlin (2007); the most detailed study remains Hurvitz (1965).

that portion of the work, one must consult RSL Moscow MS Guenzburg 123 (fifteenth century, Ashkenaz), available at the National Library of Israel website (see Figure 11). There one learns that R. Manoaḥ indeed related the careless pronunciation of both תִּזְכְּרוּ (Num. 15.40) and וּזְכַרְתֶּם (Num. 15.39) to potential confusion with סכירה 'damming up, stopping up', with explicit citation of the aforecited passage in Gen. 8.2.

Figure 11: R. Manoah, *Sefer ha-Menuḥa* (RSL Moscow MS Guenzburg 123, fol. 7r) (fifteenth century, Ashkenaz) (see especially ln. 6 from the bottom of the page)[28]



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Scholars are aware of this relatively obscure reference due to the good fortune of R. Manoaḥ's opinion being cited by R. Joseph Qaro (1488–1575), specifically in his halakhic work *Kesef Mishneh* (published in Venice in the year of the author's death),

[28] See https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/hebrew-manuscripts/viewerpage?vid=MANUSCRIPTS#d=[[PNX_MANUSCRIPTS990000863000205171-1,FL73163797]].

which in turn constitutes his own commentary to Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah*. There one reads as follows (*Kesef Mishneh*, Qeri'at Shemaʿ 2.9):[29]

> וצריך לבאר זיי"ן של תזכרו – ירושלמי שם. והטעם לומר שלא יהא נראה כאומר למען תשכרו והוי כעובדים את ה' על מנת לקבל פרס. וכתב ה"ר מנוח או שלא יהא נראה מלשון סכירה כמו ויסכרו מעינות תהום רבה. וה"ה לזיי"ן של וזכרתם:

## 4.0 Phoenician סכ"ר/זכ"ר 'remember'

Our journey has brought us to the early modern period (in the personage of Joseph Qaro), though at this point, we need to return to an earlier epoch, when Phoenician was still a living language. A data point remarkably relevant to our discussion is the well-nigh universal shift of the basic root זכ"ר 'remember' to סכ"ר in Phoenician and Punic, as witnessed by the following attestations (the sole verbal form is placed first; the remaining entries are different nominal forms):[30]

(1) ויסכרן מלקרת
'and may Melqart remember me' (*KAI* 43.15, Lapethos, Cyprus)

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[29] Taken from https://rambam.alhatorah.org/Full/Keriat_Shema/2/9#e0n6.

[30] The sources are culled mainly from the indices to the standard reference works: *KAI* (III:17); Tomback (1978, 228–29); and Krahmalkov (2000, 343–44).

(2) לכני לי לסכר ושם נעם
'to be for me as a memorial and a good name' (*KAI* 18.6 = Umm el-ʿAmed, Lebanon, no. 1)[31]

(3) מצבת סכר בחים
'a memorial stele among the living' (*KAI* 53.1, Athens, Greece)

(4) סכר כבד על פעלת מעשרת
'a monument of honour for righteous deeds' (*KAI* 123.4–5, Leptis Magna, Libya)[32]

(5) סכר כבד על גם אדר
'a monument of honour for the noble *gm*??' (*KAI* 161.5, Cherchel, Algeria)[33]

(6) סכער דרא לאלם
'the memorial of his family forever' (*KAI* 165.7–8, Guelaat Bou-Sba, Algeria)

(7) ז מצבת סכר
'this is the memorial stele' (*RES* [I:207], no. 250 = Slouschz [1942, 40, no. 23)] = Umm el-ʿAmed, Lebanon, no. 5)

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[31] The various inscriptions from Umm el-ʿAmed listed here (six in total) are conveniently published in Dunand and Duru (1962, 1:181–96), though three of them also appear in standard collections (*KAI*, etc.), as indicated. As an aside, note that Umm el-ʿAmed, no. 1, was discovered by Ernest Renan already in 1861.

[32] The final word is understood as derived from the root יש"ר 'upright, righteous', per *KAI* (2:130) 'gerechte'.

[33] For possible interpretations of גם, see *KAI* (2:151); and Krahmalkov (2000, 141).

(8) זׄ מצבת סכר
'this is the memorial stele' (Umm el-ʿAmed, Lebanon, no. 10)

(9) זׄ מצבת סכר
'this is the memorial stele' (Umm el-ʿAmed, Lebanon, no. 11)

(10) סכר אש טנא לאב לי
'a memorial which he erected for his father' (Umm el-ʿAmed, Lebanon, no. 16)

(11) סכר [ ]א לאשת נעמת מהרת
'memorial [ ] to a good and efficient woman' (Cooke 1903, 147, no. 56.1, Cherchel, Algeria)

(12) ובכבד תעצמתי אדר שפח סכ[ר ירח מד] ירח
'and in honour of his great deeds his family has magnified his memo[ry month by] month' (*CIS*, no. 6000.7–8, Carthage)[34]

(13) לסכר על מאספת עצמי
'as a memorial for the collection of my bones' (*RES* I:9 [no. 13] = Slouschz [1942, 180, no. 155], Carthage)

(14) לסכרן בחים
'as a memorial among the living' (Lapethos, Cypros, no. 3, ln. 5; Honeyman 1938, 286)

Finally, for the sake of completeness, consider *Mu Ponnim sucartim* 'do you remember (any) Punic' (*Poenulus* 1023),[35] which

[34] The text is broken at the key spot, but the reconstruction seems assured, based on the context (see Krahmalkov 2000, 344–45).

[35] I cite the text as presented by Krahmalkov (2000, 343). See also Sznycer (1967, 144).

corresponds to *ecquid commeministi Punice* (*Poenulus* 985), with the same meaning.

And for further completeness, let us recall Sychaeus, husband of Dido, introduced by Virgil in *Aeneid* 1.343, whose name may derive from the root סכ"ר, the lack of the final /r/ consonant notwithstanding (Levy 1869, 28).

Since, however, the sound /z/ essentially does not occur in Latin, and thus the letter *z* was dropped from the early Latin alphabet (borrowed from Etruscan), both the passage in Plautus's *Poenulus* and the potential derivation of the name Sychaeus from our root are non-probative.

To put the panoply of examples above into perspective, note that in all of Phoenician there are only two instances (to the best of my knowledge) with the *zayin* retained in this root (verb or noun), to wit:

(15) אש נדר עבדך עבדאסר בן ארש זכרן
'which your servant PN[1] son of PN[2] vowed as a memorial' (Naveh 1966, 234, no. 11 = Umm el-ʿAmed, Lebanon, no. 14)

(16) לזכר העלם
'in memory of the youth' (Slouschz 1942, 208, no. 209; Carthage)

As to the dates of all these inscriptions, the majority (if not all) of them are late, from the fifth century BCE onward—though this includes the two examples with *zayin* as the first root letter, in addition to those with *samekh*.

We may expand our database by incorporating Phoenician and Punic personal names (PNs) containing the root סכ"ר / זכ"ר

'remember' into the picture. There is no need to enter into the same amount of detail here, however, as the basic reference works may be consulted. Suffice to mention the following: זכר as a personal name in an unprovenanced seal (Levy 1869, 28); four inscribed arrowheads with the names [על]זכרב (Golub 2021, no. 3), זכרבעל (no. 9), זכר (no. 42), [על]זכרב (no. 53); and then examples such as בעלסכר (*RES*, no. 1314), סכר (*CIS*, no. 3751.4), סכרבעל (*CIS*, nos. 1218; 1354.2, 2871.4)—most of these registered in the standard treatment by Frank Benz (1972, 96, 109, 147).

In the case of these PNs, the former five with זכר are all early, while the latter three containing the element סכר are late. Though we should add some commentary regarding the unprovenanced seal, especially since it harks back to the early days of Phoenician studies. During the mid-nineteenth century this small object formed part of the collection of antiquities owned by Vicomte Emmanuel de Rougé (1811–1872); it was studied and described by Melchior de Vogüé (1829–1916); and then it was published by M. A. Levy, as follows:[36]

(17) לאבעד בן זכר
'(belonging) to PN son of ZKR' (Levy 1869, 28, no. 13)

Unfortunately, we have no way of firmly establishing the date or provenance of this object, and its whereabouts today are unclear.[37] Thus we must rely solely on the palaeographical analysis

[36] See also the line drawing at Tafel II, no. 12, between pp. 22–23.

[37] I am especially grateful to Matthieu Richelle (Université catholique de Louvain) for his research into the whereabouts of the seal, which

conducted by J. T. Milik (1956, 4), who dated the seal to the eighth–seventh century.

The same holds true for the aforementioned inscribed arrowheads (in fact, of the 63 items in the corpus, only one was found in a controlled excavation; all the others were obtained through the antiquities market), but all scholars agree to an eleventh–tenth century dating for these objects (Golub 2021, 22–23). In light of all the above evidence, we may wish to conclude that the shift of /z/ to /s/ in the root זכ"ר / סכ"ר 'remember' most likely occurred at a later time, say, the sixth or fifth century BCE.

There is, however, one striking piece of counter-evidence to this conclusion, to wit, the name of the prince of Byblos in the tale of Wenamun, dated to ca 1050 BCE, written in hieratic/hieroglyphic script[38] as either *ṯ-k-l-b-ʿ-r* (1.16–17) or *ṯ-k-r-b-ʿ-[x]* (1.29 [3.7]) (Gardiner 1932, 62, 64),[39] typically anglicised as Tjeker-baal (Lichtheim 1973–1980, II:225; Wente 2003, 117–18). As Anson Rainey (1982b, 133–34) astutely noted, the Egyptian sign *ṯ* (and related biliterals, as here with sign G47 [duckling,

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confirms its present unknown location. The seal is not recorded in Bordreuil (1986), and thus a home in one of the major Paris repositories is excluded. The standard collection of Avigad and Sass (1997, 270, no. 724) remarks "present location not reported."

[38] Technically hieratic script, hence I use the term 'hieroglyphic' here loosely.

[39] In the latter version, the third consonant, whether it had been *l* or *r*, was accidentally omitted (hence, my use of *[x]*). Both forms are followed by the recumbant Seth classifier (E21), reflecting the common identification of Seth and Baʿal in New Kingdom religious texts (Allon 2007).

nestling] representing *ṯ*) most frequently correlates with Hebrew/Phoenician *samekh*, and *never* with *zayin* (which is always represented by the Egyptian sign *ḏ* (and related biliterals).[40] As such, one must assume that the Egyptian scribe heard /s/ at the onset of the name of the prince of Byblos, rather than /z/, reflecting the root סכ"ר as opposed to זכ"ר.[41]

This last point leaves us with an unsettled question regarding the date of the phonological shift, though one may wish to suggest that the shift was present in Byblos at an early stage in the history of Phoenician and then spread southward and westward (across the Mediterranean) at a later stage. Fortunately, regardless of how the issue is to be decided, the question of the date of the phonological shift is not truly germane to the main goal of the present article (see below, §5.0).

Naturally, this shift from /z/ to /s/ in the root סכ"ר / זכ"ר is noted by the standard grammars of Phoenician (Harris 1936,

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[40] For a counter view, see Hoch (1984, 373–74, no. 556). However, Hoch's own data (for which see the charts on pp. 432–33, 436–37) only confirm Rainey's position.

[41] There is yet another relevant item, namely, the patronymic *ṯ-k-l-mu* in P. Anastasi III, verso 6.6, perhaps reflecting סכרם (though the final element is unclear), whose son hails from the town of *g-ḳ-tỉ* (an unknown toponym, unless it is a scribal error for *g-ḏ-tỉ* 'Gaza'). See Gardiner (1937, 31–31a); and Caminos (1954, 108, 111–12).

29; Friedrich, Röllig, and Amadasi Guzzo 1999, 27, §46a; Krahmalkov 2001, 22).[42] Moreover, the explanation is readily forthcoming, as recognised first (to the best of my knowledge) by Zellig Harris (1936, 29): "It is the only case of such assimilation of a voiced sound to a voiceless known from Phoenician writing, and must have arisen in forms like יזכר, where the ז immediately preceded the כ." Similarly, see the words of Friedrich, Röllig, and Amadasi Guzzo (1997, 27, §46a): "erklären sich vielleicht so, daß die in Imperfektformen wie **i̯azkur* > *i̯askur* in unmittelbarer Berührung mit dem folgenden stimmlosen *k* lautgesetzlich entstandene Aussprache mit stimmlosem *s* in andere Stellungen übertragen wurde."[43]

## 5.0. The Rabbinic Maxim and Phoenician Phonology

By this point the reader of this article should have discovered on his or her own the ultimate connection between the two main portions of my treatment, as adumbrated in the title: (a) the rabbinic maxim to articulate clearly the /z/ in תִּזְּכְּרוּ (Num. 15.40), as recorded in y. Berakhot 2.3 (4d), so as not to devoice the sibilant to /s/; and (b) the wealth of Phoenician evidence pointing to this selfsame shift inherent in this selfsame verb.

And now an admission: I have known of these two phenomena for several decades, and have long intended to present this

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[42] See also Lipinski (1997, 123, §14.2). Somewhat oddly, Segert (1976, 65, §33.543.3) mentions the use of *samekh* for original /z/, but he refers only to the Late Punic demonstrative pronoun forms, ס for ז, etc.

[43] See also Rainey (1982b, 133–34).

material to the academic world via a dedicated scholarly article such as the present one. In my naïveté, I had assumed that I was the first to correlate the two aspects treated herein, from discrete sub-fields within the study of Northwest Semitic languages.

Only upon researching the material for the present article, however, did I learn that, in fact, previous scholars had already noticed the connection between the rabbinic maxim and the Phoenician sound shift. The first appears to have been Zellig Harris (or better: his father), for in a footnote to his Phoenician grammar (Harris 1936, 29, fn. 11), the author states, "Dr. H. H. Harris calls my attention to the Talmudic statement that the word תזכרו in Numbers 15.40 should be articulated with special clarity (or with a 'buzzing' sound)."[44] Next one may cite E. Y. Kutscher (1965, 30, with fn. 3), who also connected the two phenomena, apparently independently of Harris, even though he cites his predecessor, albeit a different work.[45]

Most scholars, presumably, have experienced the same: one devises what one thinks is an original contribution—only to learn, upon further reading, that someone else has already stated the same thing. In this case, I am fine with such circumstance, especially since my contribution was anticipated by two of the

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[44] How interesting that Harris should use the term "'buzzing' sound" in light of our discussion above regarding תזיז 'wasp, hornet' (§2.1), a word which, discovered at Qumran, he clearly could not have known.

[45] That is to say, Kutscher cited Harris (1939, 79), in which Harris mentions "formation of root *skr* from *zkr* 'remember'," though without reference to the Talmudic passage in this instance.

giants of Northwest Semitic studies of the past century (Harris and Kutscher).

Though I am not the first to correlate the two phenomena studied herein, this article hopefully still has value, given the detail of research and analysis. Moreover, I also am able to contribute something original, not observed by either Harris or Kutscher. I refer here to the geographical component, namely, the western Galilee and the Plain of Akko.

We began this article with reference to R. Levi bar Sisi, whose dictum is cited by two other rabbinic figures. While we do not know the hometown of R. Levi bar Sisi (a contemporary of R. Judah ha-Nasi), we do know that he served the Jewish community in Simoniya (y. Yevamot 12.6 [13a] // Genesis Rabba 81.2) = biblical Shimʿon = Tell Samunieh, located ca 30 km southeast of Ḥaifa (just to the west of the present-day communal settlement of Timrat), attributed to the territory of Zebulun in Josh. 19.15 (under the ghost-word name Shimron, as observed by Anson Rainey 1982a, 140–42; 1998, 73) (see also Ezek. 48.24–25; 2 Chron. 15.9, 34.6).[46]

And then there are the two Amoraim who cite the dictum in the name of R. Levi bar Sisi. We can say little about R. Levi, especially without a patronymic and further identification, though we may observe that he is often associated with R. Joshua

[46] Note that some LXX manuscripts reflect Shimʿon (Συμοων), while others reflect Shimron (Σεμρων) (for details, see Margolis 1931, 3:368). For a recent study, see Fulton (f.c.); I am grateful to Deirdre Fulton for furnishing me with a copy of her forthcoming article and for permission to cite it here in advance of publication.

of Sikhnin (Strack and Stemberger 1991, 98), 23 km east of Akko. We can say more about R. Avdima of Ḥaifa (himself a student of R. Levi bar Sisi), since he is associated with a city with deep connections to Phoenician culture—regardless of whether Ḥaifa is identified with Shiqmona or Tell Abu Hawam, since both archaeological sites have yielded material culture objects associated with the Phoenicians (Elgavish 1993; Balensi, Herrera, and Artzy 1993; Artzy, 2008).

In sum, from what we know about these two individuals, R. Levi bar Sisi the teacher and R. Avdima the student, the geography places us at the precise meeting ground of the Hebrew and Phoenician dialects of ancient Canaanite. Indeed, such is true of Mishnaic Hebrew generally, as I have proposed in several studies (Rendsburg 1992; 2003), especially given the compilation of the Mishna (and related texts) in Sepphoris (a bit farther inland, ca 12 km northeast of Shimʿon/Simoniya).

And that is how the two discrete portions of this research intersect: for the Jews of the western Galilee and the Plain of Akko, the shift of *tizkərū* to *tiskərū* was very real. The background of R. Levi bar Sisi's comment in y. Berakhot 2.3 (4d) aligns with Phoenician perfectly: both linguistically and geographically.[47]

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[47] One final thought which crossed my mind, though naturally one must assume a singular coincidence: note that, of all the later rabbinic authorities, R. Manoaḥ of Narbonne came closest to the Phoenician reality with his reference to the root סכ"ר 'dam up, stop up'. True, Phoenician texts have been found in the Occitan/Provençal region (e.g., *KAI*, nos 69–70) (even if the root זכ"ר / סכ"ר 'remember' does not occur in these texts), but they date to one millennium earlier.

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# A CASE FOR DISTRIBUTIVE QUANTIFICATION OF *KOL* IN BIBLICAL HEBREW[*]

*Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé and Jacobus A. Naudé*

In a publication that appeared posthumously in 2020, the linguist Edit Doron posits a Distributivity Cycle, a new linguistic concept, which she claims applies to the historical development of Hebrew *kol* (absolute כֹּל, construct כָּל) as a universal quantifier ('all') and a distributive quantifier ('every').[1] The core of her argument is that she rejects an identification of *kol* as a quantifier in pre-modern Hebrew; instead, she sees it as a collective determiner or a

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[1] We conventionally gloss distributive *kol* with 'every' (rather than 'each' or 'every/each') in this article. English has two lexically differentiated distributive quantifiers, *every* and *each*, whose highly debated syntactic and semantic differences are outside the scope of this article. In a later publication we will examine the extent to which BH *kol* as a distributive quantifier reflects aspects of the English distributive quantifiers *every* and *each*.

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free choice determiner. She furthermore rejects the definite article as a determiner in Biblical Hebrew (BH) and does not acknowledge a distributive meaning ('every') for *kol* in BH.

According to Doron (2020, 2), *kol* was originally a noun meaning 'entirety', which grammaticalised into a collective determiner in BH. Although she claims that *kol* followed by a noun phrase (NP) has a collective meaning that is akin to the universal quantifier *all* (in English), she argues that *kol* is unlike 'all' in that it is not quantificational—it "denotes the entirety of a (group) individual rather than quantifying over its members/parts" (Doron 2020, 8). She argues that if *kol* followed by NP occurs under an existential modal, it is then a free choice determiner 'any', but it does not have the meaning 'every' in BH (Doron 2020, 24). In Modern Hebrew, the 'any' (free choice) interpretation of *kol* NP evolved into the distributive interpretation 'every' (Doron 2020, 25–27). By contrast, in BH, distributivity is handled on an ad hoc basis, inter alia by lexical means and floated *kol* (Doron 2020, 20–23).

The view of Doron (2020) is contra the view represented in traditional Hebrew grammars, where the Hebrew quantifier *kol* is described as either a universal quantifier (equivalent to *all* in English) or as a distributive quantifier (equivalent to *each* or *every* in English) (GKC 411, §127b–c; Waltke and O'Connor 1990, 289; JM 485–86; Van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze 2017, 309–11). Her view is also at odds with that of linguist David Gil (1996, 110, fn. 7), who argues that since Hebrew has no distinct lexical counterparts for universal quantification and distributive quanti-

fication (equivalent to the English lexical items *all* and *every*, respectively), the semantic contrast between universal and distributive quantification is expressed structurally: with plural morphology it is interpreted as a universal quantifier and with singular morphology as a distributive quantifier. The structural differentiation of quantification is well attested in antiquity in premodern Hebrew (Miller-Naudé and Naudé 2020b; Naudé 2011a; 2011b; f.c.; Naudé and Miller-Naudé 2015; 2022a; 2023) and Hellenistic Greek (Miller-Naudé and Naudé 2021; Naudé and Miller-Naudé 2022b) as well as in some modern languages (Hebrew, Arabic, Malayalam, isiZulu, Maricopa) (Gill 1996).

The views of Doron (2020), therefore, deserve critical examination, especially in light of the innovative linguistic arguments that she raises. In particular, many of Doron's arguments that *kol* in BH is not quantificational are primarily semantically based and, therefore, reductionist. Because language structure is multidimensional, arguments from other components of grammar, for example, phonology, morphology, and syntax, need to be considered to justify or falsify her claims. Specifically, this pertains to the proposed developmental cycle of *kol* as a distributive, and her rejection of the status of the BH definite article as a determiner. In terms of her proposed theory, it must also be determined whether the mechanisms utilised are the most economical and optimal and if they fit the psychological reality of grammatical description and explanation of a natural language like BH. For example, why does Doron (2020, 21–22) analyse floated *kol* as lexically distributive in BH, but consider non-floated *kol* as not distributive at all? What linguistic development

explains why floated *kol* in BH is only distributive in meaning, whereas in Modern Hebrew it is only universal in meaning (according to Francez and Goldring 2022, 341)? She offers no explanation for these facts. In addition, quantifiers across languages do not match in meaning or function; as a result, care must be taken so that there is no interference from the quantification systems of other languages when interpreting the BH system. The alterity of the BH quantification system must be taken into account as far as possible.

The article is organised as follows: In §1.0 we provide an overview of viewpoints concerning the diachronic development of *kol*. In §2.0 we evaluate Doron's arguments that *kol* does not have a distributive sense in BH. §3.0 presents the conclusions.

## 1.0. Diachronic Development of *kol*

The question of the diachronic development of *kol* has recently become a matter of debate, especially with respect to the question of the cyclic development of *kol*.

David Gil (1996, 110–20) argues that in Hebrew and Arabic the universal quantifier is the more basic and the distributive quantifier develops from it. He demonstrates how various North African dialects of Arabic participate in a quantification cycle—at the beginning of the cycle, the universal and distributive meanings of the quantifier *kull* are syntactically distinct. In the next stage, the syntactic structures and thus the meanings of universal and distributive quantification merge. In the last stage, universal and distributive quantification are again differentiated through the emergence of a new syntactic structure to express distributivity.

The linguist Martin Haspelmath (1995; 1997) identified three main crosslinguistic trajectories for the development of the distributive quantifier 'every': (1) from free choice indefinite determiners like 'any', (2) from distributive prepositions, or (3) from the universal quantifier 'all'. The universal quantifier 'all' he identified as generally developing from an adjective meaning 'whole'. Haspelmath identifies Arabic and Hebrew as having a distributive use of the quantifier, which developed out of the universal quantifier and is syntactically differentiated from it. This is the approach to the diachronic development of *kol* that we have accepted (Naudé 2011a; 2011b; f.c.; Miller-Naudé and Naudé 2020b; Naudé and Miller-Naudé 2015; 2022; 2023).

As discussed above, Doron (2020, 2) challenged this view and proposed in its place her Distributivity Cycle as formalised in (1).

(1) The Distributivity Cycle

Adjective/Noun *entire(ty)*

I → collective universal determiner *all*

II → free choice determiner *any*

III → distributive universal determiner *every*

Step I took place in BH—the noun *kol* became grammaticalised as a collective universal determiner with the meaning 'all'. Step II also took place in BH as *kol* became a free choice determiner with the meaning 'any'. Both meanings continue throughout the history of Hebrew. Step III, in which *kol* developed into a distributive universal determiner with the meaning 'every' from a free choice determiner, occurred only in Modern Hebrew or perhaps as early as Rabbinic Hebrew.

The concept of cyclicity in diachronic change is an extremely important development in historical linguistics (see Van Gelderen 2011).[2] To evaluate whether Doron's Distributivity Cycle should be accepted for BH, each component of her proposal must be thoroughly examined. In this article, we begin with a critical component of her cycle, namely, her claim that *kol* does not indicate distributivity in BH.

## 2.0. Distributivity of *kol* in Pre-modern Hebrew

In this section, we describe and critically evaluate the most important arguments advanced by Doron (2020) against a distributive meaning ('every') for *kol* as a quantifier in pre-modern Hebrew, focusing on BH; it is not possible to examine each argument within the confines of this article.

At the outset, it is important to note that Doron uses '*kol* NP' to refer to *kol* before any kind of NP, regardless of whether the NP is singular or plural, definite or indefinite. We will demonstrate throughout this essay that these morphosyntactic differences in the kind of NP that occurs with *kol* are critical for determining the various meanings of *kol*. We will therefore consider the NP that follows *kol* to be singular or plural depending upon the head of the NP. Similarly, we will consider the NP to be definite or indefinite depending upon the definiteness of the NP as a whole; construct phrases are definite if the absolute term (*nomen rectum*) is grammatically definite (as indicated by the definite article, a pronominal suffix, or a proper name).

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[2] For previous studies on cyclic language change in BH, see Naudé, Miller-Naudé, and Wilson (2019; 2022) on the Negative Existential Cycle.

## 2.1. *Kol* NP as Subject Does Not Allow Scope Ambiguity

In English and many other languages, the universal quantifier 'all' as a subject is ambiguous, allowing for two different interpretations depending upon scope. The English sentence *All the artisans made ten curtains* is ambiguous in this way, allowing either universal quantification (i.e., all the artisans as a group made a total of ten curtains) or distributive quantification (i.e., each one of the artisans individually made ten curtains) (Doron 2020, 8). Doron's claim is that this kind of ambiguity is unknown with *kol* NP—only the non-distributive interpretation is found and thus a distributive interpretation for *kol* must be rejected. As evidence, she cites two biblical verses, which we re-examine here.

The first example is Exod. 36.8, which she condenses to translate "Then all the gifted artisans among them who worked... made ten curtains" (Doron 2020, 8). The complete Hebrew sentence, however, does not support this interpretation:

(1) וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָל־חֲכַם־לֵב בְּעֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן עֶשֶׂר יְרִיעֹת שֵׁשׁ מָשְׁזָר וּתְכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי כְּרֻבֵי מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֵׁב עָשָׂה אֹתָם׃

'Then they—each artisan (lit. each wise person of heart) among those engaged in the work—made the tabernacle of ten curtains; (with) twisted linen, and blue, and purple, and crimson yarns, (with) cherubim, work of a weaver, he made them.' (Exod. 36.8)

It is important first to note that the sentence does not say 'all the artisans' (with definite plural NP) as Doron claims, but rather a selection of individuals 'among those doing the work', each one described as an 'artisan', functions as the collective subject of the

plural verb. The sentence also does not make the ten curtains the object of the verb 'they made'; instead, the object is 'the tabernacle' and the 'ten curtains' is a secondary object indicating the material of which the tabernacle is made (Waltke and O'Connor 1990, 174, §10.2.3c; see also the translation in Propp 2006, 625). The sentence does not allow scope ambiguity between universal and distributive quantification for these reasons and, therefore, scope ambiguity cannot be used against a distributive meaning of *kol* in general.

Three similar sentences relating to the building of the tabernacle in (2a)–(2c) shed additional light on aspects of the syntactic interpretation of (1):

(2a) וְעָשִׂיתָ פָּרֹכֶת תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מָשְׁזָר מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֵׁב יַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָהּ כְּרֻבִים׃

'You shall make a curtain$_i$ (with) blue and purple and crimson yarns, and twisted linen, a work of a weaver one will make it$_i$ (with) cherubim.' (Exod. 26.31)

(2b) וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן תַּעֲשֶׂה עֶשֶׂר יְרִיעֹת שֵׁשׁ מָשְׁזָר וּתְכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי כְּרֻבֵי מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֵׁב תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם׃

'You shall make the tabernacle of ten curtains$_i$, (with) twisted linen, and blue, and purple, and crimson yarns, (with) cherubim, a work of a weaver you will make them$_i$.' (Exod. 26.1)

(2c) וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַפָּרֹכֶת תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מָשְׁזָר מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֵׁב עָשָׂה אֹתָהּ כְּרֻבִים׃

'He made the curtain$_i$ of blue and purple and crimson yarn, and twisted linen, (with) work of a weaver he made it$_i$ (with) cherubim.' (Exod. 36.35)

The objective pronominal suffix אֹתָם in (1) could refer to the cherubim (the closer possible antecedent) or to the curtains (the farther possible antecedent). The examples in (2a) and (2c) demonstrate agreement between the objective pronominal suffix אֹתָהּ and the noun פָּרֹכֶת. This provides evidence that the objective pronominal suffix אֹתָם in (1) also refers to the curtains; the gender mismatch between the pronoun and the antecedent (masculine plural for feminine plural) in (1) is well-attested (see Propp 2006, 406).

The subject of the 3MS verb עָשָׂה in (1) must be carefully identified in light of the 3MPL verb וַיַּעֲשׂוּ at the beginning of the verse. In (2b), the verse is structured similarly, except that both forms of the verb עָשָׂה are inflected with the same person—there is an instruction to Moses in 2MS to make (תַּעֲשֶׂה) the tabernacle of ten curtains, which is further elaborated as a 2MS instruction to make (תַּעֲשֶׂה) them as the work of a weaver, that is, skilfully. This provides evidence that the two occurrences of the verb עָשָׂה in (1) are similarly used to refer to the same subject, while providing two different perspectives on the construction work. The first verb, inflected as 3MPL, highlights the collective endeavour of the selected artisans. The second verb, inflected as 3MS, highlights the highly skilled individual contribution of the artisans within the group earlier described earlier in the verse as כָּל־חֲכַם־לֵב בְּעֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה. The description of the artisanal activities

continues to the end of chapter 36 using only 3MS verbs throughout (example (2c) is included in this passage).[3]

The second verse that Doron uses as evidence against the distributivity of *kol* is Isa. 2.12 in (3), where she understands the *kol* NP phrase as 'all the proud and lofty'. However, because the NP is singular and indefinite, we understand the sentence instead to exhibit distributive quantification and not universal quantification:

(3) כִּי֩ יוֹם לַיהוָ֨ה צְבָא֜וֹת עַ֣ל כָּל־גֵּאֶ֣ה וָרָ֗ם וְעַל֙ כָּל־נִשָּׂ֔א וְשָׁפֵֽל׃
'For the LORD of hosts has a day against every proud and arrogant (person) and against every lofty (person)—so that he is brought low.' (Isa. 2.12)

Although reference is made in the preceding and following verses to a specific day (e.g., Isa. 2.11, 17), in this verse the day is an indefinite and, therefore, non-specific day or time that God has prepared against each proud and lofty person.[4] The meaning of *kol* is thus distributive before a singular indefinite noun. By way of contrast, in Jer. 1.14 in (4), *kol* precedes a definite plural noun phrase 'all of the inhabitants of the land'; the meaning of *kol* is the totality of the specific group. The meaning is thus universal and not distributive:

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[3] In (2a), the 3MS verb (יַעֲשֶׂה) also seems to refer to the activity of an artisan, who is not introduced in the previous context; Propp (2006, 333) translates 'one shall make'.

[4] See similarly Ezek. 30.3 with the same expression יוֹם לַיהוָה 'a day belonging to the LORD' within a context where a definite day is mentioned before (v. 2) and after (v. 17).

(4) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי מִצָּפוֹן תִּפָּתַח הָרָעָה עַל כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ׃
'And the LORD said to me: "From the north the disaster will break loose upon all the inhabitants of the land."' (Jer. 1.14)

In this example, the disaster is predicated as occurring upon 'all the inhabitants of the land' as a specific group and not upon individual members of the group. The meaning of *kol* is universal and not distributive.

We agree, then, with Doron that in BH there do not appear to be examples of ambiguous scope with *kol* NP, where both universal ('all') and distributive ('every') readings are possible (Doron 2020, 8). However, we explain the lack of ambiguity differently—it is not because *kol* disallows distributivity, but because each specific type of NP with which *kol* is associated conveys semantic nuances of universal or distributive quantification, thus precluding the possibility of scope ambiguities. In lacking scope ambiguity, *kol* in BH differs from its parallels in English, Modern Hebrew, and many other languages. As a result, the test of scope ambiguity for determining the distributivity of *kol* must be rejected for BH.

## 2.2. *Kol* with Singular NP

The second argument of Doron that we consider is that

> even when its complement NP is singular, *kol* NP denotes the entirety of a group and functions as subject of collective predicates unlike other languages where $NP_{sing}$ only cooccurs with distributive *every*. (Doron 2020, 9)

This claim can be falsified from various angles.

First, it is possible to demonstrate that *kol* with a singular indefinite NP does have the meaning ‘every’ when the head of the NP is a count noun. We present a selection of six examples.

In (5), *kol* precedes the singular indefinite count noun *śɛ*. The phrases with *kol* describe the subset of sheep and goats with particular physical characteristics that are to be removed from the flock as a whole.

(5) אֶעֱבֹ֣ר בְּכָל־צֹאנְךָ֣ הַיּ֗וֹם הָסֵר֩ מִשָּׁ֨ם כָּל־שֶׂ֜ה | נָקֹ֤ד וְטָלוּא֙ וְכָל־שֶׂה־חוּם֙ בַּכְּשָׂבִ֔ים וְטָל֥וּא וְנָקֹ֖ד בָּעִזִּ֑ים וְהָיָ֖ה שְׂכָרִֽי׃

‘I will pass through your whole flock today to remove from there every speckled and spotted animal—every dark-coloured sheep among the lambs and spotted and speckled (one) among the goats. Such shall be my wage.’ (Gen. 30.32)

Note that the *kol* NP phrases cannot be interpreted as ‘free choice’ items (see Doron 2020, 24–25) and translated with ‘any’ because Jacob and Laban’s agreement is based on the assumption by both parties that there were such animals in the flock (a fact borne out by Laban’s treachery in v. 35), whereas ‘any’ would imply that perhaps no such spotted animals were present.

In 2 Sam. 20.7–13 in (6), Joab and his men are pursuing Sheba the son of Bichri. After Joab kills Amasa and leaves his body on the road, one of Joab’s men stands by the corpse and calls out to the troops that if they are on the side of Joab and David, they must follow Joab. However, ‘all the people’ (כָּל־הָעָם) stop when they see Amasa’s corpse in the road, so the man moves his corpse to the side, allowing ‘each man [individually]’ (כָּל־אִישׁ) to pass over:

(6) כַּאֲשֶׁר הֹגֶּה מִן־הַמְסִלָּה עָבַר כָּל־אִישׁ אַחֲרֵי יוֹאָב לִרְדֹּף אַחֲרֵי שֶׁבַע בֶּן־בִּכְרִי׃
'When he was removed, each man crossed over the road after Joab to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.' (2 Sam. 20.13)

The singular indefinite noun with *kol* is the subject of a singular verb; the meaning is that each man individually followed Joab.

In (7), 'every precious stone' that adorned the king of Tyre is enumerated in the remainder of the verse:

(7) בְּעֵדֶן גַּן־אֱלֹהִים הָיִיתָ כָּל־אֶבֶן יְקָרָה מְסֻכָתְךָ אֹדֶם פִּטְדָּה וְיָהֲלֹם תַּרְשִׁישׁ שֹׁהַם וְיָשְׁפֵּה סַפִּיר נֹפֶךְ וּבָרְקַת וְזָהָב מְלֶאכֶת תֻּפֶּיךָ וּנְקָבֶיךָ בְּךָ בְּיוֹם הִבָּרְאֶךָ כוֹנָנוּ׃
'You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your adornment: carnelian, topaz, and aquamarine; chrysolite, onyx, and jasper; lapis lazuli, malachite, and emerald; and gold beautifully wrought for you, mined for you, prepared on the day you were created'. (Ezek. 28.13)

Again, it is not possible to understand *kol* NP as a 'free choice' item—'any precious stone was your adornment'—because the specific precious stones of the adornment are enumerated.

In (8a), mention is made of seven-hundred chosen warriors who were left-handed. The sentence that begins with *kol* describes a further characteristic of each one:

(8a) מִכֹּל | הָעָם הַזֶּה שְׁבַע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ בָּחוּר אִטֵּר יַד־יְמִינוֹ כָּל־זֶה קֹלֵעַ בָּאֶבֶן אֶל־הַשַּׂעֲרָה וְלֹא יַחֲטִא׃
'From all this army (lit. people), 700 chosen men were left-handed, every one could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.' (Judg. 20.16)

The nominal item that *kol* precedes is the singular masculine demonstrative pronoun *zɛ*, which is the subject of a MS participle and a 3MS imperfect verb. Contrast the similar expression with *kol-ʾēllɛ* in (8b) as the subject of a plural participle:

(8b) וַיֵּצֵאוּ בִנְיָמִן| לִקְרָאתָם| מִן־הַגִּבְעָה בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי וַיַּשְׁחִיתוּ בִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד שְׁמֹנַת עָשָׂר אֶלֶף אִישׁ אֶרְצָה כָּל־אֵלֶּה שֹׁלְפֵי חָרֶב׃

‘But the Benjaminites came out from Gibeah against them on the second day and struck down 18,000 more of the Israelites, all of these wielding (PL) a sword.’ (Judg. 20.25)

In (8a), *kol* with the singular demonstrative and singular agreement is distributive, referring to the sharp-shooting ability of each of the seven-hundred left-handed warriors. In (8b), *kol* with the plural demonstrative and plural agreement is universal, referring to the fallen Israelites as a group.[5] In neither (8a) nor (8b) is a free choice interpretation with ‘any’ possible.

In (9), pieces of meat are to be collected in a cauldron, specifically, every choice piece from the thigh and shoulder of the animal:

(9) אֱסֹף נְתָחֶיהָ אֵלֶיהָ כָּל־גֵּתַח טוֹב יֶרֶךְ וְכָתֵף מִבְחַר עֲצָמִים מַלֵּא׃

‘Collect its pieces (of meat) in it [the cauldron]—every good piece, thigh and shoulder—fill (it) with choice cuts.’ (Ezek. 24.4)

Again, a free choice interpretation of *kol* is not possible.

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[5] The feminine singular demonstrative *zōṯ* is used in the same construction after *kol* when there is generic reference to events or circumstances; see, e.g., Gen. 41.39; Deut. 32.27; Judg. 6.13; 2 Chron. 21.18; 31.1; 35.20; Ps. 44.18; Mic. 1.5.

In (10) there are two instances of distributive *kol*:

(10) אַכֶּה כָל־סוּס בַּתִּמָּהוֹן וְרֹכְבוֹ בַּשִּׁגָּעוֹן וְעַל־בֵּית יְהוּדָה אֶפְקַח אֶת־עֵינַי וְכָל סוּס הָעַמִּים אַכֶּה בְּעִוָּרוֹן׃

‘I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness. But over the house of Judah, I will open my eyes. And every horse of the peoples I will strike with blindness.’ (Zech. 12.4)

The phrase with *kol* and the singular indefinite noun סוּס is distributive in that each horse has its own rider. At the end of the verse, *kol* in the phrase וְכָל סוּס הָעַמִּים ‘every horse of the peoples’ refers to the totality of the individual members, that is, each individual entity.

We conclude that *kol* with a singular, indefinite, count NP can be used to convey distributivity.

Second, Doron (2020, 9) argues that because *kol* with singular NP can be used as the subject of collective predicates, *kol* $NP_{sing}$ refers to the entirety of the group and does not have a distributive meaning. She provides illustrations with three collective predicates: הִתְקַבֵּץ, נִקְהַל, and אָסַף. Her first example is (11a):

(11a) וַיִּתְקַבְּצוּ אֵלָיו כָּל־אִישׁ מָצוֹק וְכָל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ נֹשֶׁא וְכָל־אִישׁ מַר־נֶפֶשׁ וַיְהִי עֲלֵיהֶם לְשָׂר וַיִּהְיוּ עִמּוֹ כְּאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ׃

‘Every man who was in straights and every man who was in debt and every man who was bitter of spirit (they) joined themselves to him and he became leader over them. There were about 400 men with him.’ (1 Sam. 22.2) (Doron 2020, 9, example 16a)

The subject of the collective predicate consists of three conjoined phrases of *kol* with a singular, indefinite NP. The second phrase

(וְכָל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ נֹשֶׁא) further exhibits singular agreement within the relative clause that modifies it. We understand each of these conjoined phrases to indicate distributively the types of persons who joined themselves to David. Ezra 9.4 is similar in having *kol* with a singular participle to indicate the set of persons who gathered to Ezra (Doron's example 16c [2020, 9]).

By contrast, the same collective verbal predicate in the plural (וַיִּתְקַבְּצוּ) may have a plural subject consisting of *kol* and a plural definite NP as in (11b) (see also Judg. 9.47; Ezra 10.9):

(11b) וַיִּתְקַבְּצוּ כֹּל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־שְׁמוּאֵל הָרָמָתָה׃
'All the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel at Ramah.' (1 Sam. 8.4)

The phrase with *kol* and a definite plural NP indicates the totality of the specific group that assembled (see also Gen. 29.8; Judg. 9.6; 2 Kgs 23.1).

A further contrast can be made with a collective verbal predicate in the plural and a subject consisting of *kol* and a definite singular NP:[6]

(11c) וַיִּקָּהֲלוּ כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁלֹה לַעֲלוֹת עֲלֵיהֶם לַצָּבָא׃
'The whole congregation of the Israelites assembled at Shiloh to go up against them in war.' (Josh. 22.12)

The plural predicate conveys the nuance that the individual members of the collective are acting—in this case, the members

[6] For an example that makes a sharp contrast with (10b) in using the collective verb וַיִּקָּבְצוּ with the collective singular subject כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל, see 1 Sam. 25.1.

of the congregation individually assemble together after hearing about the altar built in Transjordan.

A collective singular NP can also occur with the same collective lexical verb in the singular:

(11d) וַיִּקָּהֵל כָּל־הָעָם אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ בְּבֵית יְהוָה׃
'All the people assembled to Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.' (Jer. 26.9)

The singular predicate conveys the nuance that the people as a whole are acting as a collective to shield Jeremiah from the officials who want to kill him.

Examples of other singular definite nouns with a collective meaning that may be used as the subject of collective predicates include: כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל 'the congregation of the sons of Israel' (Josh. 18.1; 22.12), כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל 'all of Israel' (Josh. 8.24; 1 Sam. 3.20; 4.5), כָּל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל 'every man of Israel' (Judg. 20.11; 1 Kgs 8.2; 2 Chron. 5.3), כָּל־הָעָם 'the people' (Neh. 8.1).

We conclude that *kol* with a singular NP as the subject of a plural collective verb does not preclude distributivity. When *kol* precedes a singular, indefinite NP with a count noun, as in (11a) above, the usual meaning of *kol* as a distributive quantifier is present. When *kol* precedes a plural definite NP as the subject of a plural collective verb, as in (11b) above, *kol* indicates the totality of the individual members of the entity. When *kol* precedes a singular definite collective noun, it may function as the subject of a plural collective predicate, as in (11c), or of a singular collective predicate, as in (11d), with slight nuances of meaning. With a plural predicate, the individual members of the collective entity are in view; with a singular predicate, the collective entity as a

whole is in view. The alternation in BH between singular and plural predicates with *kol* NP subjects will be further examined in §2.3.

Third, Doron (2020, 9–10) argues that *kol* with singular NP may denote "the entirety of an individual: *the whole NP/all the NP*." The two examples that she cites involve the singular indefinite nouns *lēḇ/lēḇāḇ* 'heart', *nɛpēš* 'soul', and *rōš* 'head'. The first example involves the phrases *bə-ḵål-lēḇ* and *bə-ḵål-nɛpēš*:

(12) וְלִשְׁמֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וְאֶת־עֵדֹתָיו וְאֶת־חֻקֹּתָיו בְּכָל־לֵב וּבְכָל־נֶפֶשׁ
'...to observe his commandments and his injunctions, and his statutes with all (their) heart and with all (their) soul...' (2 Kgs 23.3) (Doron 2020, 9, example 17a)

In covenant contexts, the usual expressions employ the second person pronominal suffix on the nouns 'heart' and 'soul', either the singular suffixes (Deut. 6.5; 10.12; 11.13; 30.2, 6) or the plural pronouns (Josh. 22.5; 23.14; 1 Sam. 7.3; 12.20, 24). In all of these cases, the phrase *bə-ḵål* NP seems to mean 'with your whole heart'/'with all your heart' or 'with your whole soul'/'with all your soul', etc. Outside covenantal contexts, the phrase *bə-ḵål-lēḇ* occurs five times in which it clearly means 'with the whole heart, wholeheartedly' (see also Ps. 119.34, 58, 69, 145; Zeph. 3.14):[7]

(13) אַשְׁרֵי נֹצְרֵי עֵדֹתָיו בְּכָל־לֵב יִדְרְשׁוּהוּ׃
'Happy are those who observe his decrees; they turn to him with a whole heart.' (Ps. 119.2)

[7] See also the expanded prepositional phrase בְּשִׂמְחַת כָּל־לֵבָב 'with wholehearted glee' (Ezek. 36.5).

By contrast, without the preposition, the phrase *kål lēḇ/lēḇāḇ* is used distributively for 'every heart' (see also Isa. 13.7; Ezek. 21.12), just as *kål-rōš* is used for 'every head':

(14) עַל מֶּה תֻּכּוּ עוֹד תּוֹסִיפוּ סָרֶה כָּל־רֹאשׁ לָחֳלִי וְכָל־לֵבָב דַּוִי׃
'Why should you (PL) be beaten further? Why do you (PL) continue to rebel? Every head is sick, every heart faints.' (Isa 1.5) (*not* 'the whole head is sick, the whole heart faints' [Doron 2020, 9])

Mass nouns with *kol* do not indicate distributivity and must be translated 'all' (as noted in Naudé 2011, 412 fn. 5, 417–18; Doron 2020, 9–10). However, Doron (2020, 9 fn. 11) claims that "Naudé's account ignores *kol* applied to $NP_{\text{-count-def}}$ …which Naudé claims does not exist (2011a, 418)…." She bases her claim on (15):

(15) וְכֹל | כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וּכְלֵי נְחֹשֶׁת וּבַרְזֶל קֹדֶשׁ הוּא לַיהוָה
'But all the silver and gold and vessels of bronze and iron are consecrated to the LORD.' (Josh. 6.19) (Doron 2020, 10, example 18)

Doron (2020, 9 fn. 12) claims further that "[t]he nouns gold and silver are mass nouns in BH, just as they are in Modern Hebrew and in English, since they do not pluralize, and, though singular, denote space-filling substance." This claim is too strong. Although there are no attested cases of זָהָב in the plural in BH, כֶּסֶף occurs in the plural as in (16), contra Doron's claim:

(16) וַיְצַו יוֹסֵף וַיְמַלְאוּ אֶת־כְּלֵיהֶם בָּר וְלָהָשִׁיב כַּסְפֵּיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל־שַׂקּוֹ
'Then Joseph gave orders to have their containers filled with grain, and to return their silver [pieces] (PL)—each one's to his sack'. (Gen. 42.25)[8]

When the noun כֶּסֶף is used to refer to silver pieces, which can be counted, it undergoes recategorisation from a mass noun to a count noun and thus occurs in the plural (see Corbett 2000, 81–87 for discussion and examples).

As claimed by Naudé (2011a, 417–18), a singular mass noun (זָהָב) occurs with the definite article to convey the nuance 'the totality of the entity' as in (17):

(17) כָּל־הַזָּהָב הֶעָשׂוּי לַמְּלָאכָה בְּכָל מְלֶאכֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וַיְהִי | זְהַב הַתְּנוּפָה תֵּשַׁע וְעֶשְׂרִים כִּכָּר וּשְׁבַע מֵאוֹת וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שֶׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ׃
'All the gold that was used for the work, in all the work of the sanctuary—the elevation offering of gold—came to 29 talents and 730 shekels by the sanctuary weight.' (Exod. 38.24)

The definite article plus the singular noun refers to a single body of gold (mass noun). When quantified with *kol*, it has a nuance similar to that of *kol* with a definite plural count noun.[9] This usage differs from the usage in (15) of זָהָב (and כֶּסֶף) in the singular without the definite article, which refers to the booty of Jericho, which must be interpreted within the context in light of Achan's answer in (18):

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[8] See also Gen 42.35.

[9] See also כָּל־הַמַּיִם (Exod. 7.20), which acts like a plural subject, כָּל־הַחֵלֶב (Exod. 29.13), and כָּל־הַבָּשָׂר (Isa. 40.6).

(18) וָאֶרֶא בַשָּׁלָל אַדֶּרֶת שִׁנְעָר֙ אַחַ֣ת טוֹבָ֔ה וּמָאתַ֥יִם שְׁקָלִ֖ים כֶּ֑סֶף וּלְשׁוֹן֙ זָהָ֣ב אֶחָ֔ד חֲמִשִּׁ֥ים שְׁקָלִ֖ים מִשְׁקָלֽוֹ׃

'I saw among the booty a beautiful mantle from Shinar, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels'. (Josh. 7.21)

In light of (18) it seems that all kinds of countable artefacts manufactured from gold and silver formed, inter alia, part of the booty of Jericho. The phrase כֹּל־ כֶּ֖סֶף וְזָהָ֑ב in (15) must rather be translated as 'all silver and gold [objects]', since it does not refer to a single body of gold or silver, but to various objects of gold and silver that are all kinds of countable artefacts. The construction acts, then, like an indefinite plural count noun and is distributive.[10]

A case of כֶּסֶף without the definite article with only a free choice 'any' interpretation as last resort is presented in (19):[11]

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[10] See also, כָּל־חֵ֖לֶב לַיהוָ֑ה (Lev. 3.16), which refers to various kinds of fat, כָּל־בָּשָׂ֔ר (Gen. 6.12), which is a metaphorical use referring to people (= all people) and כָּל־מַ֣יִם (Isa. 32.20), referring to various masses of water (= all waters).

[11] "Last resort" refers to "the principle that grammatical operations do not apply unless they have to as the only way of satisfying some grammatical requirement" (Radford 1997, 513). An example of last resort in English is "*do*-support", the use of the auxiliary *do* in interrogative sentences when no other auxiliary is present to undergo inversion (see Radford 1997, 216–19). The free choice meaning of *kol* ('any') is unusual in BH and is used here as a last resort. For another example, see Ezra 7.16.

(19) וַיֹּ֣אמֶר יְהוֹאָ֗שׁ אֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים֙ כֹּ֚ל כֶּ֣סֶף הַקֳּדָשִׁ֔ים אֲשֶׁר־יוּבָ֖א בֵּית־יְהוָ֑ה כֶּ֚סֶף עוֹבֵ֣ר אִ֔ישׁ כֶּ֖סֶף נַפְשׁ֥וֹת עֶרְכּ֛וֹ כֶּ֥סֶף אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲלֶ֖ה עַל־לֵ֣ב אִ֑ישׁ לְהָבִ֖יא בֵּ֥ית יְהוָֽה׃

‘Jehoash said to the priests, “All the silver of the sacred donations which is brought into the House of the LORD (must be collected)—current money, money a man may pay as the money equivalent of persons, any money that a man may be minded to bring to the House of the LORD”’. (2 Kgs 12.5)

We have seen that *kol* with a singular, indefinite noun usually indicates distributivity. With a plural collective predicate, a distributive expression with *kol* and a singular indefinite noun highlights the collectively distributive nature of the action. When the singular indefinite noun is a mass noun, distributivity is precluded and the expression with *kol* indicates ‘all’. When the body part is *lēḇ/lēḇāḇ* ‘heart’, the expression with *bə-kål-lēḇ* may refer to the entire heart of an individual or an aggregate of individuals, whereas the expression *kål-lēḇ* may be used distributively of ‘every heart’ of a group of individuals. To conclude, the claims of Doron (2020, 9 fn. 11) for an alternative analysis and her criticism of Naudé’s (2011a) proposed analysis are falsified in the light of data presented in this section.

## 2.3. Verbal Agreement with *kol* NP

The third argument of Doron that we consider concerning the lack of distributivity with *kol* is that of verbal agreement:

> If *kol* were distributive, we would expect *kol* $NP_{sing}$ to strictly agree in the singular like *every* and unlike *all*

> (which agrees either in the plural or the singular). Yet irrespective of the number marking of NP, verbal agreement is often plural, even for singular NP. (Doron 2020, 10)

Doron provides four contrastive examples. The first involves four terms for body parts, each introduced with *kol*:

(20) וְנָמֵס כָּל־לֵבָב וְרָפוּ כָּל־יָדַיִם וְכֹהֶה כָּל־רוּחַ וְכָל־בִּרְכַּיִם תֵּלַכְנָה מָיִם
'Every heart shall sink (SG) and every [pair of] hands (DU) hang slack (PL); every spirit shall grow faint (SG) and every [pair of] knees (DU) turns to water (PL).' (Ezek. 21.12) (*not* 'and all knees will be weak as water' [Doron 2020, 10])

The singular NPs all have singular verbal agreement. The other two NPs are not plural, but rather dual. They therefore are distributive in the same way that the singular NPs are distributive; none of the instances of *kol* NP in this verse should be interpreted as *all*. The only difference is that it is the *pair* of hands and the *pair* of knees that are distributively quantified, alongside the heart and the spirit. The verbs are plural because dual subjects ordinarily take plural verbal agreement (JM 597d). The use of *kol* before a dual noun is infrequent in the Hebrew Bible; it is often used to rhetorically indicate the bodily effects experienced by individual persons in a group.[12]

Doron's second and third examples contrast the use of *kol* with a singular or plural form of the noun *ʾīš*:

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[12] Additional examples include: כָּל־יָדַיִם (Isa. 13.7; Jer. 48.37; Ezek. 7.17), כָּל־בִּרְכַּיִם (Ezek. 7.17), and כָּל־מָתְנַיִם (Jer. 48.37; Ezek. 29.7; Amos 8.10; Nah. 2.11).

(21a) כִּי־מֵתוּ כָּל־הָאֲנָשִׁים הַמְבַקְשִׁים אֶת־נַפְשֶׁךָ׃
'...for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.' (Exod. 4.19)

(21b) וַיֹּאמֶר אַמְנוֹן הוֹצִיאוּ כָל־אִישׁ מֵעָלָי וַיֵּצְאוּ כָל־אִישׁ מֵעָלָיו׃
'Amnon said, "Make every man go out from me." And they, every man, went out from him.' (2 Sam. 13.9; see also Gen. 45.1) (*not* 'so everyone left' [Doron 2020, 10])

Doron understands both NPs to refer to plural 'all the men' or 'everyone'. However, the use of singular or plural NP should rather be understood to convey either the totality of the individual members of the entity (with the singular indefinite NP) or the totality of the members of the group (with the plural definite NP).

Doron's fourth example involves the singular definite NP *kål-hā-ʾɛzrāḥ* 'every citizen' as the subject of a plural verb:

(22a) כָּל־הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשְׁבוּ בַּסֻּכֹּת׃
'Each and every citizen in Israel will live (PL) in booths'. (Lev. 23.42)

Doron translates 'All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths' (Doron 2020, 10, example 20b), arguing that the singular noun *ʾɛzrāḥ* is a collective noun and thus takes plural agreement. However, singular agreement with the same noun preceded by *kol* also occurs:

(22b) כָּל־הָאֶזְרָח יַעֲשֶׂה־כָּכָה אֶת־אֵלֶּה לְהַקְרִיב אִשֵּׁה רֵיחַ־נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה׃
'Every citizen shall do (SG) thus with these (offerings) when presenting an offering by fire of pleasing odour to the LORD.' (Num. 15.13)

Doron is correct that subject-verb agreement in BH is not 'haphazard' (Doron 2020, 10). Instead, it is well documented that

collective nouns may take singular or plural agreement, even in adjacent verses (e.g., עָם יוֹרֵד in Judg. 9.36 versus עָם יוֹרְדִים in Judg. 9.37; see JM 518e). This means that variation in number agreement is one strategy in BH for conveying semantic-pragmatic nuance. Furthermore, there is a diachronic aspect in that later biblical books tend to use the plural rather than the singular (contrast וְהָעָם נָסּ in 2 Sam. 23.11 with וְהָעָם נָסוּ in 1 Chron. 11.13). A careful analysis of each of her counterexamples reveals that number agreement with *kol* NP cannot be used as an argument against the distributivity of *kol*.

## 2.4. Floated *kol* and Quantificational Distributivity

Doron argues that floated *kol* (that is, *kol* with a pronominal suffix) is not quantificational, but rather indicates lexical distributivity. For example, in (23), Doron views floated *kol* as indicating lexically the distributivity of the preceding *kol* NP phrase:

(23) וְכָל־צָרַיִךְ כֻּלָּם בַּשִּׁבְיָ יֵלֵכוּ
'All your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity.' (Jer. 30.16; Doron's translation)

We argue that because floated *kol* is a quantifier, it may convey distributive quantification or universal quantification, depending upon the syntactic characteristics of the NP that it modifies, just like non-floated *kol*.

First, floated *kol* involves a construction in which *kol* has 'floated' from its normal position before a NP to a location after the NP. Compare the non-floated *kol* in (24a) and the floated *kol* in (24b) (from Naudé 2011b, 121–22):

(24a) שִׁמְעוּ־נָ֖א כָּל־עַמִּ֑ים
'Hear, now, all peoples!' (Lam. 1.18)

(24b) יוֹד֣וּךָ עַמִּ֔ים כֻּלָּֽם׃
'Peoples will praise you, all of them.' (Ps. 67.4; also Mic. 1.2)

The resumptive pronominal suffix on floated *kol* in (24b) refers to the NP עַמִּים 'peoples'. In the same way that *kol* as a quantifier in (24a) is a universal quantifier before a plural noun ('all peoples'), *kol* as a floated quantifier in (24b) is a universal quantifier ('all of them')—*kol* in (24b) cannot be interpreted as having a distributive meaning ('each one of them'). The semantics of *kol* as indicating universal or distributive semantics when it floats are identical to its semantics when it occurs before the NP (Naudé 2011b, 135–36).

In (23) above, the translation must be 'and all your adversaries, all of them, will go into captivity'—floated *kol* has universal meaning and not distributive meaning. Although it is cross-linguistically unusual for a floated *kol* phrase to be appositional to *kol* NP, it does occur in BH; floated *kol* "indicates a strengthening of the nuance of quantification" (Naudé 2011b, 133).

Second, many instances of floated *kol* in BH cannot possibly be interpreted as distributive:

(25) וְהַ֥ר סִינַ֖י עָשַׁ֣ן כֻּלּ֑וֹ
'Mount Sinai was smoking, all of it.' (Exod. 19.18)

Because Mount Sinai is a single entity, it cannot be referred to distributively.[13] Instead, with the quantifier *kol*, it can only mean 'all of Mount Sinai' or 'the whole Mount Sinai'.

Similarly, many collective nouns (or proper names referring collectively to people-groups) are used with floated *kol*, which cannot be understood distributively:

(26) עַל־כֵּן֙ עַל־מוֹאָ֣ב אֵילִ֔יל וּלְמוֹאָ֖ב כֻּלֹּ֑ה אֶזְעָ֔ק
'Therefore, for Moab I will howl, and for Moab, all of it, I will cry out.' (Jer. 48.31)

However, instances of distributive floated *kol* are also found:

(27) כִּ֤י מִקְּטַנָּם֙ וְעַד־גְּדוֹלָ֔ם כֻּלּ֥וֹ בוֹצֵ֖עַ בָּצַ֑ע וּמִנָּבִיא֙ וְעַד־כֹּהֵ֔ן כֻּלּ֥וֹ עֹשֶׂ֖ה שָׁקֶֽר
'For from their smallest [person] to their greatest [person], each one is greedy for gain; and from prophet to priest, each one acts falsely'. (Jer. 6.13)

In future research, we will exhaustively present an analysis of floated *kol* as a quantifier with respect to universal and distributive quantification.

## 3.0. Conclusions

In this paper we have examined Doron's recent arguments made against viewing *kol* as indicating distributivity in BH, which form part of her larger argument against *kol* as a quantifier in premodern Hebrew (Doron 2020). Drawing on our approach to language as a complex system (Miller-Naudé and Naudé 2020a) and

[13] Additional examples include Zech 4.2; Job 34.13.

attention to the specific morpho-syntactic features of each instance of *kol* NP (e.g., definiteness, number, countability, nominal status, specificity, individuation, inclusivity; see especially Naudé 2011a), we have provided evidence that Doron's arguments against a distributive use of *kol* cannot be accepted.

In future research, we will examine Doron's other arguments concerning *kol* in BH and its historical development in premodern Hebrew. In particular, we will examine her views that the definite article is not a determiner in BH, *kol* as a 'free choice determiner', mass nouns and *kol*, 'floated *kol*' and its distributive and universal usages, and maximality and homogeneity of *kol* (with implications for negated *kol* NP).

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# *KOL* AS A UNIVERSAL QUANTIFIER IN BIBLICAL HEBREW*

*Adina Moshavi*

The determiner כֹּל, which occurs approximately 5400 times in the Hebrew Bible, is one of the most versatile grammatical items in Biblical Hebrew (BH), with at least five apparently distinct uses. With a singular noun whose meaning involves physical or temporal extension, it can mean 'the whole', as in (1a).

(1a) וְשֵׁם־הַנָּהָר הַשֵּׁנִי גִּיחוֹן הוּא הַסּוֹבֵב אֵת כָּל־אֶרֶץ כּוּשׁ׃
'The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush'. (Gen. 2.13 NRSV); 'entire' (NIV)

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The other uses, illustrated in (1b)–(1e), fall under the rubric of *quantification*, a term denoting the semantic function of determiners such as English *some*, *all*, *any*, *most*, etc. (Naudé 2011):[1]

(1b) וַיִּהְיוּ֙ כָּל־יְמֵ֣י אָדָ֔ם אֲשֶׁר־חַ֖י תְּשַׁ֥ע מֵא֛וֹת שָׁנָ֖ה וּשְׁלֹשִׁ֣ים שָׁנָ֑ה
'Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years. (Gen. 5.5 *ESV*)

(1c) וַיַּצְמַ֣ח יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהִ֗ים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה֙ כָּל־עֵ֣ץ נֶחְמָ֣ד לְמַרְאֶ֔ה וְטוֹב֙ לְמַאֲכָ֔ל
And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up 'every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.' (Gen. 2.9 *ESV*)

(1d) לֹֽא־תַעֲשֶׂ֣ה כָל־מְלָאכָ֔ה
'You shall not do any work.' (Exod. 20.10 *ESV*)

(1e) וְכֹ֣ל אֲשֶׁ֤ר יִקְרָא־לוֹ֙ הָאָדָ֔ם נֶ֥פֶשׁ חַיָּ֖ה הִ֥וא שְׁמֽוֹ׃
'And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.' (Gen. 2.19 *ESV*)

In its 'all' (1b) and 'every' (1c) uses כֹּל expresses *universal* quantification, indicating that a property or relation holds for all items in a particular set or group. The difference between the meaning of כֹּל in the two sentences above is generally characterised as the difference between *distributive* and *collective* quantification: (1b) expresses that the total number of days that Adam lived was 930 years, and (1c) expresses that God created every (kind of) tree.

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[1] Additional papers by Naudé and Miller-Naudé on כֹּל are cited in §2.5, below. For a general discussion of determiners that express quantification, see Payne and Huddleston (2002, 358–97). On quantifiers in Modern Hebrew, see Goldring and Francez (2012); Netzer (2013).

In its 'any' reading (1d) כֹּל expresses *existential* quantification, indicating the existence of at least one entity belonging to a particular set or group. In this use, כֹּל is a *negative polarity item*, a type of word which is grammatical only in non-affirmative sentences (Pullum and Huddleston 2002, 834–38).[2] In its 'whatever' use (1d) כֹּל expresses *free choice*, which involves ignorance and/or indifference (Pullum and Huddleston 2002, 832). This use often occurs in modal (1d) or generic clauses, and is frequently characteristic of phrases that are modified by relative clauses, as in (1e).

The present paper is concerned with כֹּל as a universal quantifier, a use which occurs in a broader range of syntactic and semantic clause types than the existential and free choice uses. A central question regarding universal כֹּל is its distributivity/collectivity in different syntactic environments. Hebraists widely agree that the universal quantifier כֹּל is distributive when it quantifies an indefinite singular noun (כָּל־יֶלֶד) and collective when it quantifies a definite plural noun (כָּל־הַיְלָדִים); they disagree on its meaning with a definite singular noun (כָּל־הַיֶּלֶד) or with an indefinite plural (כָּל־יְלָדִים). Since the Modern Hebrew descendant of כֹּל, *kol*, is grammatical only in the first two constructions, the question of how to understand its uses in the latter two constructions takes

[2] On this use of כֹּל in BH, see Naudé and Rendsburg (2013); Naudé (f.c.); on a somewhat similar use of *kol* in Modern Hebrew, see Glinert (1982; 2013). On the Modern Hebrew quantifier *kolšehu* 'any' and its semantic development from Rabbinic Hebrew to Modern Hebrew, see Bar-Asher Siegal (2022).

on added significance. Another question is whether there are differences between the meanings of BH כֹּל and Modern Hebrew *kol* in their common syntactic environments.

This article takes a fresh look at the meaning of universal כֹּל in Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH) prose, drawing on modern linguistic research on universal quantifiers in English, Modern Hebrew, and other languages. I will argue that כֹּל is always distributive with singular indefinite nouns, but can be distributive or collective with plural definite nouns. Furthermore, I will argue that the two constructions which are ungrammatical in Modern Hebrew, the definite singular כֹּל phrase and the indefinite plural כֹּל phrase, are not broadly productive constructions in BH either, but are restricted to certain non-prototypical noun classes and/or mismatches between morphosyntactic and semantic definiteness.

The structure of the paper is as follows: §1.0 presents essential theoretical background on the concepts of collective and distributive universal quantification. §2.0 surveys and evaluates views on universal כֹּל in the literature on BH. Research methods and definitions are described in §3.0, and a corpus-based analysis of CBH prose is presented in §4.0. Conclusions are summarised in §5.0.

## 1.0. Theoretical Background

### 1.1. Distributivity and Collectivity

Distributivity and collectivity are generally defined as pertaining to the relation between the predicate of a sentence and an argument denoting a set or group of two or more entities (generally a

plural or coordinated noun phrase).[3] A predicate is distributive if it applies to each member of the set denoted by the subject/object, and is collective if it applies only to the set as a whole. For example, the predicate *smile* is always distributive, since smiling is an activity that can be performed only by an individual (e.g., 2a). Additional predicates that are always distributive include, e.g., *sleep*, *walk*, and *sing*. In contrast, the predicate *met* is collective, because the act of meeting can only be performed by a group of two or more individuals, e.g., (2b). Additional predicates that are always collective include, e.g., *gather*, *meet*, and *be numerous*.

(2a) *The girls smiled.*
(2b) *The girls met in the park.*

Distributive and collective predicates can be distinguished by the distinct logical entailments of the sentences in which they occur. For example, (3a) entails both *Kim smiled* and *Sandy smiled*, while (3b) entails neither **Kim met in the park* nor **Sandy met in the park*.

(3a) *Kim and Sandy smiled.*
(3b) *Kim and Sandy met in the park.*

A predicate can be collective with respect to one argument and distributive with respect to another. For example, *kill* is always distributive with respect to the object, but may be distribu-

[3] Relevant linguistic studies on distributivity and collectivity include, among others, Taub (1989); Winter (2002); Brisson (2003); Tonciulescu (2011); De Vries (2017); Champollion (2020); Glass (2021).

tive or collective in relation to the subject. Thus (4) has two readings: in one the boys each killed different snakes, and in the second reading they killed the snakes together.

(4) *The boys killed two snakes.*

Adding a distributive marker (e.g., *each*) or collective marker (e.g., *together*) can eliminate one of the readings. *The boys each killed two snakes* has only the distributive reading and *The boys killed two snakes together* has only the collective reading.

## 1.2. Distributive and Collective Universal Quantification

Universal quantifiers are classified as distributive or collective depending on the relation between the predicate and the quantified noun which serves as an argument: when the predicate is collective/distributive, the quantifier is likewise said to be collective/distributive. As already mentioned, the presence of distributive or collective markers can force a particular interpretation of ambiguous predicates.

English has two universal quantifiers, *every* and *all*. *Every* is considered to be a distributive quantifier, because it occurs with distributive predicates, e.g., (5a), and is incompatible with collective predicates, e.g., (5b).[4] *Every* is only compatible with indefinite singular nouns. While this would appear to contradict the statement above that distributivity (and collectivity) apply to

[4] The discussion here is limited to the use of universal quantifiers with prototypical count nouns, i.e., nouns which inflect for number and denote individuated entities.

nouns denoting a set of entities, *every* pragmatically implicates that the quantified noun belongs to a set with more than two members (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 379).

(5a) *Every girl smiled.*
(5b) **Every girl met in the park.*

While *every* is exclusively distributive, *all* cannot be simply characterised as collective. *All* quantifies plural nouns, both indefinite and definite. While *all* is compatible with some collective predicates, e.g., (6a),[5] it resembles *every* in its compatibility with distributive predicates, e.g., (6b). In fact, there is no semantic difference between (5a), with *every*, and the corresponding sentence with *all* in (6b).

(6a) *All the girls gathered in the park.*
(6b) *All the girls smiled.*

According to Huddleston and Pullum's (2002, 377), *all* usually has a distributive interpretation, but does not exclude a collective interpretation. Gil (1995, 324) maintains that *all* is unmarked with respect to distributivity and collectivity, but this is hard to reconcile with the fact that, for many speakers, *all* forces a distributive reading of sentences with ambiguous predicates, like (7) (Champollion 2020).[6]

(7) *All the students wrote an essay.*

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[5] Other collective predicates, such as *be numerous*, are incompatible with both quantifiers: **Every girl/*all the girls were numerous*.

[6] For other speakers both readings are possible (Taub 1989, 2; Gil 1995, 322).

## 1.3. The Modern Hebrew Universal Quantifier *kol*

Modern Hebrew has only one universal quantifier, *kol* (the descendent of the BH quantifier).[7] When it quantifies an indefinite singular count noun, *kol* is compatible only with distributive predicates, as seen by contrasting (8a) with the ungrammatical (8b) (Shlonsky 1991; Haspelmath 1995, 379; Tonciulescu 2011, 79; Francez and Goldring 2012, 380). In this use it is equivalent to English *every*.

(8a) *kol yeled ḥiyex.* 'Every child smiled.'
(8b) **kol yeled nifgaš ba-parq.* '*Every child met in the park.'

When it quantifies definite plural nouns, *kol* can occur with distributive (9a) or collective predicates (9b). Here, too, *kol* appears to be equivalent to *all*. *Kol*, however, cannot quantify indefinite plurals as in (9c), unlike *all*, which is grammatical in such sentences.

(9a) *kol ha-yeladim ḥiyxu.* 'All the children smiled.'
(9b) *kol ha-yeladim nifgešu ba-parq.* 'All the children met in the park.'
(9c) **kol yeladim nifgešu ba-parq.* 'All children met in the park.'

[7] The discussion here does not address other uses of *kol*, which shares the same range of meanings exemplified in (1a), (1d), and (1e), above.

## 2.0. Previous Studies of the Biblical Universal Quantifier כֹּל

This section briefly surveys the treatment of universal כֹּל in the existing literature on BH.

### 2.1. GKC

According to GKC (§127b–c) the interpretation of כֹּל depends exclusively on the definiteness of the quantified noun: with a definite noun (e.g., כָּל־הָאָדָם) the meaning of כֹּל is '*the entirety*, i.e., *all, the whole*'. What we would call the collective use of the quantifier is viewed by GKC as closely linked to the original use of כֹּל as a noun meaning 'whole'. With an indefinite noun, according to GKC, כֹּל means 'any' (the negative polarity use, not relevant for our purposes) or "distributively 'each, every'", e.g., בְּכָל־יוֹם 'every day' (Ps. 7.12).[8]

GKC introduces, if only implicitly, a distinction between syntactic and semantic definiteness: it is noted that the collective use may lack the article in poetry, as in (10). The implication is that בָּמוֹת is semantically definite and therefore כָּל־בָּמוֹת(בְּ) is collective.

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[8] A similar view is expressed in JM (§139e–h). BDB (כֹּל) does not distinguish clearly between collectivity and distributivity, stating, for example, that the singular is collective with or without the article, but glossing some of the adduced examples as 'every'.

(10) וַיְקַטְּרוּ־שָׁם בְּכָל־בָּמוֹת
'and there they made offerings on all the high places' (2 Kgs 17.11 *ESV*); 'every high place' (*NIV*)

GKC grapples with reconciling the assertion that indefinite כֹּל phrases are distributive with the fact that כֹּל is also used of indefinite non-count nouns, as in (11). The explanation offered is that when כֹּל is combined with "singular nouns used collectively" (i.e., in this case, aggregate nouns), the distributive meaning of כֹּל is extended to indicate "totality".[9]

(11) כִּי־הִשְׁחִית כָּל־בָּשָׂר אֶת־דַּרְכּוֹ עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃ ס
'for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth.' (Gen. 6.12 *NRSV*)

## 2.2. Brockelmann

Brockelmann (1956, 71) presents a different view in a brief discussion which does not explicitly invoke the concepts of collectivity and distributivity. In contrast to GKC, he asserts that number, rather than definiteness, is the conditioning factor of the interpretation of כֹּל: with plural nouns כֹּל means 'alle' and with singular nouns it means 'jeder'.

[9] Such a semantic change would be highly unexpected: Haspelmath's (1995) crosslinguistic study identifies multiple languages in which a word meaning 'whole' changes to a universal quantifier meaning 'all', and a few languages, including Hebrew, in which a quantifier meaning 'all' changes to mean 'every', but does not cite any in which a quantifier meaning 'every' changes to 'all'.

## 2.3. Bekins

Bekins (2014, 97) asserts briefly that both definiteness and number must be taken into account to determine whether כֹּל is collective or distributive: when it is combined with indefinite singular nouns it is distributive, and in all other cases (i.e., definite plurals, definite singulars, and indefinite plurals) it is collective, and should be glossed 'all'.[10]

## 2.4. Naudé and Miller-Naudé

Naudé and Miller-Naudé (Miller 2010; Naudé 2011a; 2011b; f.c.; Naudé and Miller-Naudé 2015; Miller-Naudé and Naudé 2020) observe that the biblical universal quantifier כֹּל appears to have a broader syntactic distribution than Modern Hebrew *kol*: like the modern quantifier, כֹּל can quantify indefinite singular nouns and definite plural nouns, but it can also occur in two constructions that are not compatible with modern *kol*: definite singular count nouns (12a) and indefinite plurals (12b).

(12a) כָּל־הָאֶזְרָח יַעֲשֶׂה־כָּכָה אֶת־אֵלֶּה לְהַקְרִיב אִשֵּׁה רֵיחַ־נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה׃
'Every native Israelite shall do these things in this way, in offering a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.' (Num. 15.13 *ESV*)

(12b) וַיְקַטְּרוּ־שָׁם בְּכֹל־בָּמוֹת
'and there they made offerings on all the high places' (2 Kgs 17.11 *ESV*); 'every high place' (*NIV*)

[10] Bekin's distributive example (Josh. 11.14), which he glosses 'any', is actually an instance of the existential (negative polarity item) use of כֹּל.

In Naudé and Miller-Naudé's view the meaning of כֹּל is only partially encapsulated by the distributive/collective opposition; an additional property, *individualisation* (a term that they do not define) is also relevant.[11] The distributivity versus collectivity of כֹּל depends on the definiteness of the quantified noun, while individualisation depends on its number.[12] Their claims are as follows (glosses are theirs):

1. With a definite plural noun (כָּל־הַיְלָדִים 'all the children'), כָּל is collective and non-individualising, meaning 'the totality of'.
2. With a definite singular noun (כָּל־הַיֶּלֶד 'all the children'), כָּל is collective and individualised, meaning 'the totality of the individual members of the group'.[13]

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[11] In Naudé (2011) a different (undefined) term, *specificity*, is used as a synonym for individualisation.

[12] It can be objected that individualisation is not intuitively different from distributivity; indeed GKC §127b appears to use the two terms synonymously. See also *BHRG* (309), where the parameter of individualisation is omitted, and both singular and plural indefinites are given the same gloss, 'each and every'.

[13] As an example of this category Naudé and Miller-Naudé cite כָּל־הַבֵּן הַיִּלּוֹד הַיְאֹרָה תַּשְׁלִיכֻהוּ וְכָל־הַבַּת תְּחַיּוּן׃ (Exod. 1.22). The כֹּל phrases in this verse, however, are in modal clauses, and are modified by relative clauses (in the second phrase elliptically), resulting in ambiguity between a universal and a free-choice rendering: 'Every Hebrew boy that is born (or: any Hebrew boy that is born) you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl (or: any girl) [that is born] live.' (*NIV*, round and square brackets mine).

3. With an indefinite singular noun (כָּל־יֶלֶד ‘every child’), כָּל is distributive and individualised.[14]
4. With an indefinite plural noun (כָּל־יְלָדִים ‘each and every child’), כָּל is distributive and non-individualised.

## 2.4. Interim Discussion

Comparing the four above views, we see that there is agreement that כֹּל is collective when it quantifies a definite plural noun (כָּל־הַיְלָדִים), and is distributive when it quantifies an indefinite singular noun (כָּל־יֶלֶד).

The meaning of כֹּל with a definite singular noun (כָּל־הַיֶּלֶד) is debated: according to GKC, Bekins, and Naudé and Miller-Naudé, it is collective, whereas in Brockelmann’s view, it is distributive. The meaning of כָּל with an indefinite plural (כָּל־יְלָדִים) is also debated: according to GKC and Naudé and Miller-Naudé, it is distributive, whereas according to Bekins, it is collective. Naudé and Miller-Naudé’s introduction of the concept of individualisation does not resolve this debate, since what it means for a phrase to be both collective and individualised is not explained. Nor are how individualised and non-individualised distributivity differ; their paraphrases (‘the totality of the individual members’;

[14] In keeping with the assertion that כֹּל with an indefinite singular noun is always distributive, Naudé (2011, 418) denies that an indefinite mass noun can be quantified by כֹּל. Doron (2020, 9) points out that this assertion is incorrect, citing כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב ׀ וְכֹל ‘but all silver and gold’ (Josh. 6.19 *ESV*).

'every' versus 'each and every') are not of much help in this regard.[15]

GKC and Naudé and Miller-Naudé appear to view distributivity and collectivity as inherent properties of the noun phrase, rather than as depending on the predicate. Although Bekins understands collectivity and distributivity as properties which "affect the semantics of the event structure," he does not demonstrate that each type of כֹּל phrase is restricted to a particular kind of event structure.

## 2.5. Doron

Doron's (2020) analysis of כֹּל is radically different from the views discussed above. In her view, biblical כֹּל is not a quantifier, but rather a degree determiner, denoting the entirety of a group or mass entity (i.e., 'the whole set').[16] Definiteness and number are irrelevant to its interpretation, which is invariable.[17] Doron does not deny that many sentences with כֹּל, such as וַיְנַשֵּׁק לְכָל־אֶחָיו 'and

[15] See also Muraoka (2020, 172–73) for a critique of Naudé and Miller-Naudé with respect to Qumran Hebrew.

[16] In the post-biblical period, according to Doron, the word developed into a distributive determiner, which was nonetheless not a quantifier. Doron's definition of quantifiers is unusual, excluding determiners that serve as the syntactic heads of construct phrases, such as Modern Hebrew *kol* 'all', *rov* 'most', *še'ar* 'the rest of', etc. (for details, see Doron 1992). For the standard view that all of these Modern Hebrew determiners are quantifiers, see Francez and Goldring (2012); Netzer (2013).

[17] It should be noted that, in Doron's view, the article -הַ does not mark definiteness in BH, but is an emphatic marker.

he kissed all his brothers' (Gen. 45.15), have a distributive meaning which can be conveyed by the English gloss 'every'. Rather, she claims that the property of distributivity is not conveyed by כֹּל, but by some other element in the sentence, either overt or covert. The element can be a predicate that is inherently distributive with regard to a particular argument, e.g., הָרַג 'kill', which is distributive with relation to the object. Other elements which can convey distributivity include, e.g., the distributive adverb אִישׁ 'each', as in (13a), and lexical reduplication, as in (13b).

(13a) וַיִּכְרְתוּ גַם־כָּל־הָעָם אִישׁ שׁוֹכֹה

'So every one of the people also cut down his bundle (lit. also all the people cut down each his bundle)' (Judg. 9.49 *ESV*)

(13b) אֶלֶף לַמַּטֶּה אֶלֶף לַמַּטֶּה לְכֹל מַטּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּשְׁלְחוּ לַצָּבָא׃

'You shall send a thousand from each of the tribes of Israel to the war (lit. a thousand for a tribe, a thousand for a tribe, from all the tribes of Israel).' (Num. 31.4 *ESV*)

The sense in which כֹּל is 'collective' for Doron differs fundamentally from the way universal quantifiers such as *all* are collective: while a universal quantifier is collective only when the predicate is collective, for Doron כֹּל is 'collective', i.e., denoting the entire set, even when the predicate is distributive. This surprising claim rests on the unorthodox assertion that the biblical word is a degree determiner meaning 'entirety (of a group)', rather than a universal quantifier. Against this is the fact that כֹּל does not fit the standard definition of a degree determiner, i.e., a determiner that inflects for grade (comparison), like *many/more/most*. Moreover, in the standard view, degree determiners are

considered to be a type of quantifier, expressing so-called *multal* quantification (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 365, 393). Yet another difficult aspect of Doron's position is the attribution of the meaning 'entirety of a group' to כֹּל phrases with singular nouns.

## 3.0 Research Methods and Definitions

### 3.1. Delineation of the Corpus and Excluded Clause Types

The data for this analysis is restricted to classical BH prose (Genesis–Kings), henceforth CBH. Poetry, which has a tendency to omit the definite article and often pluralises abstract nouns which are always singular elsewhere, deserves a separate study. כֹּל in Transitional and Late Biblical Hebrew awaits a separate study as well.

Sentences in which כֹּל is open to an interpretation other than the universal one have been excluded. Negative sentences and other negative polarity contexts (primarily interrogatives and conditionals) have been systematically excluded, since כֹּל generally has an existential ('any') interpretation in these contexts. Singular כֹּל phrases in modal sentences expressing permission or obligation, e.g., (14a)–(14b), or in habitual past sentences, e.g., (14c), have been systematically excluded as well. In these types of sentences, the universal ('every/all') and free choice ('any', whatever') interpretations frequently have the same truth conditions, making it difficult to rule out the free

choice reading (see Doron 2020).[18] When a phrase is modified by a relative clause, the free-choice reading is often likely even in non-habitual past tense sentences (14d).

(14a) מִכֹּ֖ל עֵ֣ץ־הַגָּ֑ן אָכֹ֥ל תֹּאכֵֽל׃

'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden.' (Gen. 2.16 *ESV*); 'any' (*NIV*)

(14b) וְעַתָּ֗ה הִרְג֤וּ כָל־זָכָר֙ בַּטָּ֔ף וְכָל־אִשָּׁ֥ה יֹדַ֖עַת אִ֣ישׁ לְמִשְׁכַּ֣ב זָכָ֔ר הֶרֹֽגוּ׃

'Now therefore, kill every (= any) male among the little ones, and kill every (= any) woman who has known man by lying with him.' (Num. 31.17 *ESV*)

(14c) וְרָאָ֣ה שָׁא֗וּל כָּל־אִ֤ישׁ גִּבּוֹר֙ וְכָל־בֶּן־חַ֔יִל וַיַּאַסְפֵ֖הוּ אֵלָֽיו׃ ס

'And when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he attached him to himself.' (1 Sam. 14.52 *ESV*)

(14d) וַיָּבֹ֗אוּ כָּל־אִ֤ישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נְשָׂאוֹ֙ לִבּ֔וֹ

'And they came, everyone whose (= whoever's) heart stirred him' (Exod. 35.21 *ESV*)

Occurrences in which כֹּל may have the meaning 'whole', rather than universal quantification, include definite nouns that denote entities with physical or temporal extension, e.g., כָּל־הָאָ֔רֶץ

[18] This is also true for comparative כֹּל phrases with a singular group noun, e.g., וַיִּגְבַּהּ֙ מִכָּל־הָעָ֔ם מִשִּׁכְמ֖וֹ וָמָ֑עְלָה 'he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward' (1 Sam. 10.23 *ESV*); 'all the people' (*NJPS*), as well as comparative phrases with a noun that has a pseudo-group use (see §3.2, below), such as וַיֶּחְכַּ֛ם מִכָּל־הָאָדָ֖ם 'For he was wiser than all other men' (1 Kgs. 5.11 *ESV*); 'anyone else' (*NIV*). Comparative phrases with plural nouns do not seem to be ambiguous in this way, even though they can be translated with *any of*, e.g., וְיִשְׂרָאֵ֞ל אָהַ֤ב אֶת־יוֹסֵף֙ מִכָּל־בָּנָ֔יו 'Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children (Gen. 37.3 *KJV*); 'more than any other of his sons' (*ESV*).

'all the land/the whole land' (Gen. 13.9), and definite group nouns, e.g., כָּל־הַקָּהָל הַזֶּה 'all this congregation/this whole congregation' (Exod. 16.3). When nouns such as עִיר 'city' and אֶרֶץ 'land, world' are used metonymously to refer to the inhabitants of a region, they behave like group nouns and exhibit the same ambiguity, e.g., וְכָל־הָאָרֶץ 'and all the world/the whole world' (Gen. 41.57).[19]

Also excluded are occurrences in which כֹּל appears without an overt quantified noun, e.g., (15a), or is "floated" after the noun with a suffixed resumptive pronoun, e.g., (15b) (Naudé 2011).[20]

(15a) כְּיֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־כֹּל׃
'And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.' (Gen. 9.3 *ESV*)

(15b) וְהַר סִינַי עָשַׁן כֻּלּוֹ
'Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke' (Exod. 19.18 *JPS*)

## 3.2. Linguistic Categories

The first two subsections below present definitions of morpho-syntactic definiteness and number, as well as semantic aspects of

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[19] When the phrase has a definite singular group noun and is governed by partitive מִן, כֹּל is not ambiguous, e.g., מִכֹּל ׀ הָעָם הַזֶּה שְׁבַע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ בָּחוּר אִטֵּר יַד־יְמִינוֹ 'Among all these were 700 chosen men who were left-handed' (Judg. 20.16 *ESV*).

[20] The latter construction is rare in classical prose; in all of its occurrences the determiner has the meaning 'whole' rather than universal quantification.

these concepts. The last subsection presents definitions of distributivity and collectivity.

### 3.2.1. Definiteness

A noun is morphosyntactically definite if it has the article, is a personal or demonstrative pronoun or a proper name, or is in construct with a definite noun or noun phrase. Definite direct objects are often governed by the direct object marker אֵת. A direct object that is governed by אֵת is characterised here as morphosyntactically definite even if it lacks other indications of definiteness.

A noun is semantically definite if it refers to an identifiable and/or unique entity in the context of the discourse.[21] While the most common way for an expression to be semantically definite is through anaphoric reference (i.e., referring to an entity evoked in the preceding textual context), expressions can also be considered definite when they are identifiable based on world knowledge, or are conventionally associated with an entity or a situation evoked in the text, as in 'the waiter' in a text describing a meal at a restaurant. Although morphosyntactic and semantic definiteness generally coincide, nouns are occasionally morphosyntactically indefinite, but semantically definite.

### 3.2.2. Number and Noun Class

Number is defined here as a morphosyntactic category. In the case of a prototypical count noun, the singular form is the one

[21] For further discussion of semantic definiteness in BH, see Bekins (2013).

that is morphologically unmarked (i.e., does not have a plural morpheme) and triggers singular verbal and pronominal agreement when functioning as the subject or antecedent of an anaphor, respectively. Plural forms have plural morphemes and trigger plural agreement; they can be quantified by numerals. The singular and plural forms of prototypical nouns also differ semantically, in that the singular refers to a single entity and the plural refers to multiple entities.

Number in the case of non-prototypical count nouns does not fit these neat patterns. *Uninflectable plural nouns*, e.g., BH בָּקָר 'cattle', are morphologically unmarked, but trigger plural verbal agreement and can be quantified by high numerals (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 345); semantically, they refer to multiple entities.

The *group noun*, e.g., BH קָהָל 'congregation', denotes an individuated entity that is composed of multiple entities; it inflects for number like prototypical nouns, but verb and pronominal agreement rules vary from language to language (Corbett 2000, 187–90).[22] BH is among the languages that allow morphologically singular group nouns to trigger either singular or plural agreement (JM §150e), unlike Modern Hebrew, which treats them as singular. We classify such BH forms as having *compound*, rather than singular number. From the semantic perspective, sin-

[22] I avoid the term *collective noun* sometimes applied to group nouns in order to avoid confusion with the concept of collectivity as discussed in this paper. Group nouns can be distributive or collective depending on the predicate of the sentence.

gular group nouns have both singular and plural aspects, designating a single entity that is comprised of multiple entities. Plural group nouns refer to multiple groups of entities.

The concept of compound number is also relevant to BH nouns whose morphologically singular forms have a *quasi-group* use that refers to multiple individuals, in addition to a prototypical use. These are mostly nouns referring to well-established categories of people, e.g., אִישׁ 'a man/people' in phrases such as אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל 'a man/the men of Israel'; נֶפֶשׁ 'a person/people'; זָכָר 'male/males' (JM §135). A singular quasi-group noun can trigger either singular or plural agreement, just like a group noun. In the plural, quasi-group nouns differ from group nouns in that they refer to a single group of individuals, e.g., אַנְשֵׁי יְהוּדָה 'the men of Judah'.

Number is inapplicable to non-count nouns, which constitute a separate class with several sub-types (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 335–39). They are generally morphologically unmarked for number, are uninflectable, trigger singular agreement, and are not able to be quantified by numerals.[23] Three types occurring in the biblical corpus are *mass nouns*, which denote a substance rather than an entity, e.g., זָהָב 'gold'; *uninflectable abstract nouns*, e.g., מְלָאכָה 'work', which occur only in

[23] An exception is the non-count מַיִם 'water', which is uninflectable like other non-count nouns, but is morphologically plural and triggers plural agreement.

the singular;[24] and *aggregate nouns*, which denote a collection of objects belonging to a functional category, e.g., רְכוּשׁ 'goods'.

Non-count nouns differ from count nouns in their compatibility with universal quantification. For example, Modern Hebrew universal *kol* can quantify definite non-count nouns, e.g., **kol ha-sukar matoq* 'all the sugar is sweet',[25] even though it cannot quantify definite singular count nouns, e.g., **kol ha-yeled ḥiyex* '*all the child smiled'. Furthermore, *kol* cannot quantify indefinite non-count nouns, e.g., **kol sukar matoq* '*all sugar is sweet', despite the fact that it can quantify indefinite count nouns, e.g., *kol yeled ḥiyex* 'every child smiled' (Francez and Goldring 2012, 392). In the analysis below we will examine whether there are differences between the biblical כֹּל and modern *kol* in their compatibility with non-count nouns.

### 3.2.3. Distributivity and Collectivity

A universal כֹּל phrase in a particular sentence in its context is classified as distributive if the predicate applies separately to each individual referred to by the noun phrase; otherwise, it is

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[24] Some of these nouns occur in the plural in poetry or late texts; if their only occurrences in CBH is in the singular, they are assumed here to be uninflectable.

[25] The Hebrew sentence with the mass noun is ambiguous: it can be interpreted as a generic sentence describing a property of sugar, or a predication with respect to a particular quantity of sugar; in English, in contrast, the generic reading is available only when the quantified noun is indefinite, e.g., *all sugar is sweet*.

collective. Distributivity is confirmed by a translation test: when the predicate is distributive, כֹּל can be appropriately rendered 'every', assuming the necessary adjustments of definiteness and number are made.

## 4.0. Analysis of the Data

### 4.1. Indefinite Singular כֹּל phrases

There are relatively few indefinite singular כֹּל phrases with prototypical count nouns in our corpus; illustrative examples follow.[26]

(16a) וַיַּצְמַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה כָּל־עֵץ נֶחְמָד לְמַרְאֶה וְטוֹב לְמַאֲכָל
'And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food' (Gen. 2.9 *ESV*); cited above as (1c)[27]

(16b) כִּי־עָצֹר עָצַר יְהוָה בְּעַד כָּל־רֶחֶם לְבֵית אֲבִימֶלֶךְ
'For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech' (Gen. 20.18 *ESV*); 'every womb' (*NJPS*)

(16c) וְכָל־אִשָּׁה חַכְמַת־לֵב בְּיָדֶיהָ טָווּ
'And every skillful woman spun with her hands' (Exod. 35.25 *ESV*)

The indefinite singular כֹּל phrases in the corpus, in the morphosyntactic sense of number defined above, are all distributive. While there are collective phrases with nouns that are unmarked

[26] The other occurrences are Gen. 7.14; 20.18; Exod. 35.22; Num. 8.16; 18.21; 31.51; Deut. 3.6; 1 Sam. 4.8; 2 Kgs 17.13.

[27] Additional indefinite singular occurrences referring to kinds are Gen. 7.14 and Exod. 35.22.

for plural inflection, these are all used in a pseudo-group sense, i.e., נֶפֶשׁ ‘people’, e.g., (17a), זָכָר ‘males’, e.g., (17b), or בְּכוֹר ‘firstborn’, e.g., (17c).[28] Significantly, all the phrases are semantically definite, referring to already-mentioned entities, e.g., (17a) or entities that are inferable from known entities, e.g., (17b) and (17c). The semantic definiteness of the phrases is typically reflected in the use of syntactically definite renderings in the translations.

(17a) אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי רָחֵל אֲשֶׁר יֻלַּד לְיַעֲקֹב כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר׃

‘These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen.’ (Gen. 46.22 *KJV*) (≠ every soul)

(17b) פְּקֻדֵיהֶם בְּמִסְפַּר כָּל־זָכָר מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ וָמָעְלָה פְּקֻדֵיהֶם שִׁבְעַת אֲלָפִים וַחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת׃

‘Their listing according to the number of all the males from a month old and upward was 7,500.’ (Num. 3.22 *ESV*) (≠ every male)

(17c) וַיִּהְיוּ כָּל־בְּכוֹר זָכָר בְּמִסְפַּר שֵׁמוֹת מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ וָמַעְלָה לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁנַיִם וְעֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף שְׁלֹשָׁה וְשִׁבְעִים וּמָאתָיִם׃ פ

‘And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names, from a month old and upward as listed were 22,273.’ (Num. 3.43 *ESV*) (≠ every firstborn male)

The above data indicate that Modern Hebrew and BH do not differ with respect to the distributivity/collectivity of singular indefinite כֹּל phrases: both restrict such phrases to distributive

[28] The other occurrences with pseudo-group nouns are Gen. 46.22, 25, and 26; Exod. 1.5; Num. 3.12, 22, 28, 34, 39, 41, 43; 8.18; 26.62; 31.35.

meaning. The fact that כֹּל phrases with semantically definite pseudo-group nouns are able to be collective is explainable on the basis of their syntactic and semantic resemblance to definite plural כֹּל phrases, which, as discussed below, can be distributive or collective.

Notably, the CBH corpus also contains כֹּל phrases with indefinite non-count nouns, as in the non-inflectable abstract noun מְלָאכָה 'work' in (18a)[29] and the aggregate noun בָּשָׂר 'flesh' (= living things) in (18b). This usage of כֹּל differs from Modern Hebrew, where, as noted above, such phrases are ungrammatical.

(18a) וַיְמַלֵּא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בְּחָכְמָה בִּתְבוּנָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל־מְלָאכָה׃
'and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship' (Exod. 35.31 *ESV*)

(18b) כִּי־הִשְׁחִית כָּל־בָּשָׂר אֶת־דַּרְכּוֹ עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃
'for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth.' (Gen. 6.12 *NRSV*); cited above as (11)

## 4.2. Definite Plural כֹּל Phrases

Definite plural כֹּל phrases are very common in the corpus; they frequently involve prototypical nouns, and can be distributive or collective. In all these respects CBH exhibits no differences from

[29] Additional indefinite uninflectable abstract nouns quantified by כֹּל are טוּב 'goodness' (Deut. 6.11); מְלָאכָה 'handiwork' (Exod. 35.31); עֲבֹדָה 'labour' (Exod. 1.14); עֵת 'time' (e.g., Exod. 18.22).

Modern Hebrew. The following are representative examples with distributive meaning.[30]

(19a) וַתֵּצֶאן כָּל־הַנָּשִׁים אַחֲרֶיהָ
'and all the women went out after her' (Exod. 15.20 *ESV*) (= every woman)

(19b) וַיָּקֻמוּ כָל־בָּנָיו וְכָל־בְּנֹתָיו לְנַחֲמוֹ
'All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him' (Gen. 37.35 *ESV*) (= every son… every daughter)

(19c) וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־נְשִׂיאֵי הָעֵדָה
'And when all the leaders of the congregation came' (Exod. 16.22 *ESV*) (= every leader)

(19d) וַיְנַשֵּׁק לְכָל־אֶחָיו
'And he kissed all his brothers' (Gen. 45.15 *ESV*) (= every brother)

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[30] Additional distributive examples include, e.g., Gen. 7.11; 17.23, 27; 35.4; 45.15; 50.7 (2x); Exod. 9.14; 34.30; 35.13, 16; 38.3, 30, 31; 39.37, 39; Num. 15.40; 16.10; 17.21; Deut. 2.34; Josh. 3.1; 11.4; Judg. 9.3 (2x), 46, 51, and many additional occurrences. Definite plural כֹּל phrases governed by comparative מִן are generally distributive, e.g., וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אָהַב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו 'Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children' (Gen. 37.3 KJV) presumably means that Israel loved Joseph more than each of his other sons, not that he loved him more than all of his other sons put together.

Illustrative collective examples are shown below.[31]

(20a) כָּל־מִשְׁפְּחֹת הַשּׁוּחָמִי לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם אַרְבָּעָה וְשִׁשִּׁים אֶלֶף וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת׃ ס
'All the clans of the Shuhamites, as they were listed, were 64,400.' (Num. 26.42 *ESV*) (≠ every clan)

(20b) כָּל־עָרֵי בְנֵי־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים שְׁלֹשׁ־עֶשְׂרֵה עָרִים וּמִגְרְשֵׁיהֶן׃ ס
'The cities of the descendants of Aaron, the priests, were in all thirteen cities with their pasturelands.' (Josh. 21.19 *ESV*) (≠ every city)

(20c) וּבְךָ֞ בָּחַר יְהוָ֣ה לְהִיּ֗וֹת לוֹ֙ לְעָ֣ם סְגֻלָּ֔ה מִכֹּ֖ל הָעַמִּֽים
'For the LORD your God has chosen him out of all your tribes' (Deut. 18.5 *ESV*)

## 4.3 Definite Singular כֹּל Phrases

This construction, which is ungrammatical in Modern Hebrew, is scarcely attested in CBH, contrary to initial impressions.[32] While there are many definite כֹּל phrases in the corpus that are singular

[31] Additional collective occurrences serving as subjects include, e.g., Gen. 5.5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 27, 31; 9.29, Num. 1.45, 46; 2.9, 16, 24, 31 (and many similar occurrences in passages following); 26.43; 35.7; Josh. 10.6. Also collective is a כֹּל phrase in Gen. 40.20 designating multiple beneficiaries. Partitive phrases like (21c) are collective as well, e.g., Exod. 19.5; Deut. 7.6; 12.5; 29.20; 1 Sam. 2.28; 2 Sam. 10.9; 1 Kgs 5.4, 14; 11.32; 14.21.

[32] Many occurrences of כֹּל phrases with definite singular nouns are ambiguous between the universal and free-choice interpretations (see discussion in §3.1, above), and are therefore excluded from the data. Of the eligible clauses that might have been included in this category, many are not actually morphosyntactically singular, as detailed below.

in the sense that they are unmarked for plural inflection, unambiguous cases of the morphosyntactic singular according to the definition presented above are vanishingly rare in this construction.[33] The only occurrence I have found is אֶת־כָּל־עִיר ‘every city’, in (21), which is definite because it is governed by the object marker.[34]

(21) וַנִּלְכֹּד אֶת־כָּל־עָרָיו בָּעֵת הַהִוא וַנַּחֲרֵם אֶת־כָּל־עִיר מְתִם וְהַנָּשִׁים וְהַטָּף
‘And we captured all his cities at that time and devoted to destruction every city, men, women, and children.’ (Deut. 2.34 *ESV*)[35]

The other occurrences which might have been thought to provide evidence of this construction are not unambiguously singular in the morphosyntactic sense defined above. Many involve non-count nouns, to which the category of number is inapplicable. For example, there are several phrases with mass nouns such as עָפָר ‘dust’, e.g., (22a).[36] Many have uninflectable abstract

[33] While כֹּל with a suffixed pronoun satisfies the conditions for this category, in all these occurrences the meaning is ‘whole’ rather than universal quantification (e.g., Exod. 25.36).

[34] The Targum translates כל קרויא ית ‘all the cities’. The Samaritan Pentateuch has עריו ‘his cities’ instead of עִיר. Deut. 2.34 can be compared to the similar Deut. 3.6, which has an indefinite phrase כָּל־עִיר ‘every city’, without the object marker.

[35] A reviewer suggests that אֶת here might be the comitative preposition ‘with’ rather than the object marker; in that case the כֹּל phrase would be indefinite.

[36] Other mass nouns occurring in definite כֹּל phrases include, e.g., דָּם ‘blood’ (Exod. 29.12); זָהָב ‘gold’ (e.g., Num. 7.86); כֶּסֶף ‘silver’ (e.g., Num. 7.85); עָפָר ‘dust’ (Exod. 8.13); עֵשֶׂב ‘grass’ (e.g., Exod. 10.15). As

nouns, such as מְלָאכָה ‘work’, e.g., (22b),[37] or aggregate nouns, such as רְכֻשׁ ‘goods’, e.g., (22c).[38] A few occurrences involve uninflectable plural nouns, such as צֹאן ‘sheep’, e.g., (22d).[39] The last example is distributive.

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noted above, definite singular mass nouns can be quantified in Modern Hebrew with *kol* as well, despite the fact that this construction is ungrammatical with count nouns.

[37] Other apparently uninflectable abstract nouns occurring in definite כֹּל phrases include (not a comprehensive list; includes concrete applications of the abstract meaning): אֱמֶת ‘truth’ (Gen. 32.11); חָכְמָה ‘wisdom’ (e.g., 1 Kgs. 10.4); חֶמְדָּה ‘desire’ (1 Sam. 9.20); חֵפֶץ ‘delight’ (e.g., 1 Kgs 5.24); חֵשֶׁק ‘desire’ (1 Kgs 9.1); טוּב ‘goodness’ (e.g., 2 Kgs 8.9); מְלָאכָה ‘work’ (e.g., 1 Kgs 7.14); מַעֲשֶׂה ‘deed, work’ (e.g., Deut. 2.7); נְבָלָה ‘disgraceful folly’ (Judg. 20.10); עֲבֹדָה ‘labour’ (e.g., Num. 3.26); עֵצָה ‘advice’ (e.g., 2 Sam. 16.23); תְּלָאָה ‘hardship’ (e.g., Exod. 18.8).

[38] Other aggregate nouns occurring in definite כֹּל phrases include (not a comprehensive list): אֹכֶל ‘food’ (e.g., Gen. 14.11); זֶרַע ‘seed, offspring’ (e.g., Gen. 46.6); חַיִל ‘wealth’ (e.g., Num. 31.9); לֶחֶם ‘bread’ (Josh. 9.5); מַלְקוֹחַ ‘booty’ (Num. 31.11); פְּרִי ‘fruit’ (e.g., Exod. 10.15); רֶכֶב ‘chariotry’ (e.g., Judg. 4.15); שָׁלָל ‘spoil, plunder’ (e.g., Num. 31.11). On nouns which may or may not belong in this category see fn. 39, below.

[39] Another uninflectable plural noun is בָּקָר ‘cattle’ (e.g., Num. 7.87). There is insufficient evidence to determine whether the following animal terms are aggregate nouns or uninflectable plural nouns: בְּהֵמָה ‘beasts’ (e.g., Gen. 8.1); חַיָּה ‘animals’ (e.g., Gen. 2.20); מִקְנֶה ‘cattle’ (e.g., Gen. 31.18); עוֹף ‘birds’ (e.g., Gen. 2.19); רֶמֶשׂ ‘creeping things’ (e.g., Gen. 1.25). טַף ‘children’ (e.g., Gen. 34.29) does not fit neatly into either category, as it variously triggers singular or plural agreement (both occurring together in Num. 14.31).

(22a) כָּל־עֲפַר הָאָרֶץ הָיָה כִנִּים בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם׃
'All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. (Exod. 8.13 *ESV*)

(22b) וַיַּרְא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־הַמְּלָאכָה
'And Moses saw all the work' (Exod. 39.43 *ESV*)

(22c) וַיָּשֶׁב אֶת כָּל־הָרְכֻשׁ
'Then he brought back all the possessions' (Gen. 14.16 *ESV*)

(22d) וְיָלְדוּ כָל־הַצֹּאן נְקֻדִּים
'all the flock bore spotted' (Gen. 31.8 *ESV*)

Another group of purportedly singular phrases involves nouns which have a pseudo-group use; the pseudo-group reading is variously certain or at least possible, depending on the context. For example, the plural verb in (23a) establishes that the singular subject, כָּל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל is used in its pseudo-group meaning and, therefore, has compound number. This example is distributive.[40] In (23b), the pseudo-group reading is forced by a collective predicate. In (23c) the singular verb creates ambiguity between the pseudo-group reading ('all the men of Israel') and the prototypical use ('every man of Israel'); both readings are distributive.

(23a) וְהִנֵּה כָּל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאִים אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ
'Then all the men of Israel came to the king' (2 Sam. 19.42 *ESV*) (= every man of Israel)

[40] Other distributive occurrences with אִישׁ are Judg. 20.33; 1 Sam. 31.12; 2 Sam. 19.42. A distributive occurrence with בְּכֹר 'firstborn' is Num. 3.42.

(23b) כָּל־נֶ֙פֶשׁ֙ בָּנָ֣יו וּבְנוֹתָ֔יו שְׁלֹשִׁ֖ים וְשָׁלֹֽשׁ׃

'all the souls of his sons and his daughters *were* thirty and three.' (Gen. 46.15 *KVJ*)[41] (≠ every soul)

(23c) וַיַּ֗עַל כָּל־אִ֛ישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל מֵאַחֲרֵ֣י דָּוִ֑ד

'So every man of Israel went up' (2 Sam. 20.2 *KJV*); 'all the men of Israel' (*ESV*)[42]

The last group of purportedly singular phrases involves proper names of nations (24a)–(24b). Such names have compound number and are inherently definite. The first illustrative example is distributive and the second collective.

(24a) וַיְהוֹשֻׁ֗עַ וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ רָא֣וּ כִֽי־לָכַ֣ד הָאֹרֵ֔ב אֶת־הָעִ֖יר

'And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had captured the city' (Josh. 8.21 *ESV*) (= every person in Israel)

(24b) וַיִּקַּ֣ח שָׁא֗וּל שְׁלֹ֤שֶׁת אֲלָפִים֙ אִ֣ישׁ בָּח֔וּר מִכָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל

'Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel' (1 Sam. 24.3 *ESV*) (≠ every person in Israel)

The almost complete absence of definite כֹּל phrases with morphosyntactically singular nouns in the corpus indicates that this construction is not productive in CBH, presenting no contrast

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[41] Other collective occurrences with definite singular נֶפֶשׁ are Gen. 46.27 and Exod. 1.5.

[42] When the כֹּל phrase is the subject of a singular verb (e.g., Judg. 7.24) or functions as object (e.g., Josh. 10.24), it is usually impossible to distinguish the quasi-group and prototypical readings. An additional ambiguous structure is the כֹּל phrase which is a constituent in a coordinated subject in a sentence with a plural verb, e.g., סוּס 'horse/s' (Exod. 14.23; Deut. 29.9) (סוּס has a quasi-group use in military contexts, often appearing in coordination with the aggregate noun רֶכֶב 'chariots').

with Modern Hebrew in this respect. The fact that definite pseudo-group nouns and names of nations can occur with כֹּל is most likely due to their compound, rather than truly singular number. As we have already seen, the definite plural כֹּל phrase is a highly productive construction. Like the latter, the definite compound-number כֹּל phrase can be either distributive or collective. It is worth remembering that while definite mass nouns can be quantified by כֹּל in CBH, this is true of modern *kol* as well.

## 4.4. Indefinite Plural כֹּל Phrases

This construction, ungrammatical in Modern Hebrew, is extremely rare in the CBH corpus. Only one occurrence involves a semantically indefinite noun phrase:[43]

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[43] While Rashi explains this to mean 'instruments made out of wood', modern scholars widely emend it to בכל עז ובשירים 'with all (his) might' or בכלי עז 'with mighty instruments. The former emendation is based on v. 14 in the same chapter, the parallel to our verse in 1 Chron. 13.8, which has בְּכָל־עֹז וּבְשִׁירִים, and 4QSam[a], with essentially the same text as Chronicles. The latter emendation is based on the LXX. According to the first emendation, the כֹּל phrase involves a non-count abstract noun, and according to the second emendation, there is no כֹּל phrase.

(25) וְדָוִד ׀ וְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מְשַׂחֲקִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּכָל עֲצֵי בְרוֹשִׁים וּבְכִנֹּרוֹת וּבִנְבָלִים וּבְתֻפִּים וּבִמְנַעֲנְעִים וּבְצֶלְצֵלִים׃

'And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of *instruments made of* fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.' (2 Sam. 6.5 *KJV*) (= on every kind of instrument)

The other seven definite plural כֹּל phrases I am aware of appear to be semantically definite, and are typically translated with a definite noun phrase. Four occurrences refer to lists of entities appearing immediately earlier in the texts, as in כָּל־עָרִים 'all (the) cities' in (26a), which provides a sum of all the cities previously listed;[44] all four are collective. The occurrence in (26b) refers to multiple entities, בְּכָל־בָּמוֹת 'all (the) high places' that have been repeatedly mentioned throughout the passage, most recently two verses earlier. This example is distributive.

(26a) כָּל־עָרִים עֶשְׂרִים וָתֵשַׁע וְחַצְרֵיהֶן׃ ס

'all the cities *are* twenty and nine, with their villages' (Josh. 15.32 *KJV*) (≠ every city)

(26b) וַיְקַטְּרוּ־שָׁם בְּכָל־בָּמוֹת

'And there they made offerings on all the high places' (2 Kgs 17.11 *ESV*); 'at every high place' (*NIV*)

The rarity of prototypically indefinite plural כֹּל phrase indicates that it is not a productive construction in CBH. Since almost all of the few phrases with this structure are semantically definite, they are presumably a variation of the highly productive

[44] The others are Josh. 21.26, 39, both with עָרִים 'the cities', and Josh. 12.24, with מְלָכִים 'the kings'.

definite plural construction, which, as seen above, can be distributive or collective.

## 5.0 Conclusions

This article has drawn new conclusions regarding the classification of כֹּל in different syntactic constructions in CBH prose. These results are the product of the following research methods and procedures, which, taken together, distinguish the present study from existing literature on the subject:

1. Corpus-based analysis
2. Isolating universal כֹּל from other uses of the determiner
3. Distinguishing between number in prototypical and non-prototypical count nouns
4. Distinguishing between morphosyntactic and semantic definiteness
5. Defining distributivity and collectivity based on the relation between the כֹּל phrase and the meaning of the sentence in which it occurs

It has been demonstrated that biblical כֹּל has the same meaning as modern *kol* in their common syntactic environments: כֹּל is distributive with singular indefinite nouns, and can be distributive or collective with plural definite nouns. Obscuring the former rule is the common phenomenon of pseudo-group nouns that are semantically definite appearing in כֹּל phrases. The fact that such phrases can be collective can be explained by their syntactic and semantic resemblance to definite plural כֹּל phrases.

It has further been demonstrated that the two constructions that are ungrammatical in Modern Hebrew, i.e., the definite singular phrase and the indefinite plural phrase, are not productive constructions in CBH prose either. Almost all the definite singular כֹּל phrases in the corpus require or admit a pseudo-group use interpretation, or are names of nations; both types, therefore, resemble the plural כֹּל phrase from the syntactic and the semantic perspective. The few indefinite plural כֹּל phrases in the corpus are best understood as variations of definite plural כֹּל phrases, since they are nearly always semantically definite. Like the definite plural phrase, they, too, can be distributive or collective.

Finally, a difference between the biblical and modern universal quantifiers was identified, namely that only biblical כֹּל can be used with indefinite non-count nouns.

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# A MORE POLITE SUGGESTION: THE LENGTHENED IMPERATIVE IN BIBLICAL HEBREW*

*Ethan Jones*

The imperative in Biblical Hebrew (BH) knows a short (קוּם) and lengthened form (קוּמָה). The function of the latter has been elusive and at times uninteresting to Hebraists. As Kaufman (1991, 198) observes, the long imperative is "generally ignored or at best left unexplained in most grammars." To his point, Waltke and O'Connor (1990, §34.4) consider the two imperatives as tautological: "No differentiation *is possible* between the regular and long (-ָה) forms of the imperative, since they occur in similar contexts" (emphasis mine). On the other hand, Fassberg (1999, 7) finds the lengthened imperative "a salient feature of biblical Hebrew grammar."

In the variegated landscape of scholarly proposals, this essay puts forth a claim that the lengthened imperative is marked

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for politeness. While not entirely novel in its conclusion, the present study breaks new ground by way of linguistic politeness. This linguistic background allows the study to avoid mutual exclusions that have appeared in previous research. In other words, this essay is able to appreciate, to some degree, claims of directionality (Fassberg 1999) and euphony (JM §§48d, 114m), all while keeping in mind the possibility of pragmatic and semantic shifts in later stages of Hebrew (cf. Notarius 2021).

In what follows, I introduce the most significant proposals for the function of the lengthened imperative in BH. In doing so, I highlight the merits and challenges of the arguments (§1.0). From there, the field of historical linguistic politeness is presented (2.0). Special attention is given to the work of Kim Ridealgh on ancient Egyptian politeness. Once done, I offer my own description of the lengthened imperative according to a taxonomy of linguistic politeness (§3.0).

## 1.0. Review of Literature

### 1.1. Redundancy and Style

We begin with claims that call into question the purpose of this essay. As noted, Waltke and O'Connor (1990) consider the two forms as tautological. In addition, Tsevat (1955) is ambivalent about any distinction between the short and long imperative. The evidence these scholars usher forth is so-called similar contexts.

First a word on this line of argumentation. *Prima facie*, a claim based on similar contexts does not stand up to scrutiny. For instance, any number of features can appear in similar 'contexts'

(whatever such a word might mean) and still manifest some distinction in pragmatics or semantics. Thus, Tsevat's confident conclusion and the like are to my mind suspect.[1]

Second, the textual evidence merits our attention.

(1) שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה׀ אֶחָד׃
'Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.' (Deut. 6.4)[2]

(2) שִׁמְעָה אֱלֹהִים רִנָּתִי הַקְשִׁיבָה תְּפִלָּתִי׃
'Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.' (Ps. 61.2)

It would seem unlikely that the use of the long forms in (2) is indiscriminate.[3] Nevertheless, Waltke and O'Connor (1990, §34.4) find the second imperative in (2), הַקְשִׁיבָה, to have a "fixed imperative form." For the first (שִׁמְעָה), euphony may be a reasonable factor in this context. But there is still more to see in this text. The following verses, (3–4), are filled with reciprocity between the psalmist and God as well as the explicit praise of the addressee, all of which are typical of a *positive politeness* strategy (cf. 2.1).

A fairly convoluted position is held by JM (§48d). In one way, theirs is close to that of the tautologists above. They write

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[1] Tsevat's bravado (1955, 111) is plainly seen in his remark that, had one simply noted what he did, then it "would have saved many an author from seeking special meanings in the [long] imperative... where none exist…" (cf. GKC §48k).

[2] All translations are *NRSV*, unless otherwise noted.

[3] Example (2) has explicit reference to the speaker, which is lacking in (1), i.e., (2) is more personal than (1)—interpretable as a function of directionality and/or politeness.

that the second person imperative with paragogic *heh* "has, in general, *no appreciably different nuance* from the usual form" (emphasis mine). Confusingly, they find the paragogic *heh* as "emphatic in origin" (however ambiguous 'emphatic' might be). Despite no particular nuance in meaning, they conclude that the lengthened form does carry an "honorific" sense when one is addressing God, prophet, and priest. In response, I think it quite unlikely that the grammatical form has no distinct meaning except when addressing the deity or other religious authorities, somehow being a vestige of the so-called 'emphatic' use. In any case, linguistic politeness may be able to categorise this 'honorific' sense better.

Beyond the above conclusions, there are two substantial proposals that merit discussion. The first is that the lengthened imperative marks directionality toward the speaker (§1.2). The second is that the form highlights politeness (§1.3). We turn now to the case of directionality.

## 1.2. Directionality

Fassberg (1999) makes an argument that has immediate appeal. He claims the long imperative signals that the action is directed *toward the speaker*, whereas the short imperative is aimed elsewhere. Fassberg's contention finds corroboration with previous claims, such as the use of הָבָה, קוּמָה, and לְכָה as exhortations in which cooperation of and by the speaker is intended (Mann 1954).[4]

[4] See also the similar, though independent, study of Shulman (1996), as well as her later research (1999; 2001).

Some representative examples of Fassberg's taxonomy (1999, 10) are:

(3) שָׁמְרָה נַפְשִׁי וְהַצִּילֵנִי אַל־אֵבוֹשׁ כִּי־חָסִיתִי בָּךְ׃
'O guard my life, and deliver me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.' (Ps. 25.20)

(4) וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָבָה | נִבְנֶה־לָּנוּ עִיר
'Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."' (Gen. 11.4a)

(5) הָאֵירָה פָנֶיךָ עַל־עַבְדֶּךָ
'Let your face shine upon your servant.' (Ps. 31.17)

The evidence of directionality includes the first-person pronominal suffixes (3), verbs inflected in the first person (4), and third-person expressions of deference 'your *servant*' (5). Fassberg (1999, 11) finds that the directionality is contextual in some instances (e.g., Gen. 32.30). Beyond that, he identifies an "indirect relation" to the speaker. Thus, there is no expected concrete movement towards the speaker, but rather some type of relief (e.g., Ps. 9.20–21).

At this point, Fassberg (1999, 11–12) must reckon with the fact that these benefactive petitions are often directed to God. What is more, these social dynamics and literary contexts (typically Psalms) have been interpreted as polite requests to the deity. Fassberg (1999, 12), however, dismisses the polite interpre-

tation on account of the fact that someone of higher social standing, especially a deity, can also use the lengthened form to address someone of a lower status.[5]

Fassberg's study goes a long way to show that the lengthened imperative marks directionality toward the speaker. Indeed, the initial frame of the argument and Fassberg's examples are persuasive. The more concrete directionality with verbs such a הָבִיאָה (Gen. 27.7), תְּנָה (Num. 11.13), and לְכָה (Num. 10.29), for instance, would seem to be irrefutable. The metaphorical extension to 'benefit' (to/for the speaker) is also reasonable.[6]

But there are some potential problems. Hélène Dallaire (2014) highlights arguable weaknesses in Fassberg's study. She notes that the regular imperative occurs frequently with a preposition -לְ + first-person suffix (to/for me).[7] Dallaire (2014, 71) then leaves the matter with a number of questions:

> If this is the case, what should we make of the regular imperatives... followed by a preposition or noun + first-person pronominal suffix? Should we assume that the two constructions... are stylistic variations, or do they actually represent different ideas?

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[5] Cf. Gen. 27.4; Gen. 19.32, and most especially, God addressing Abram (Gen. 15.9), as well as Moses (Num. 11.16).

[6] Pss 9.20–21; 10.12; 57.6; 59.6; 69.28.

[7] Though, it should be noted that its non-use in similar situations, or the use of synonymous forms in its place, does not necessarily say anything about its meaning. Furthermore, the fact that a lengthened imperative is not always used in cases where speaker directionality and/or benefit obtains does not necessitate that this is not the basic function of the morpheme.

In her view, these data refute the direction or benefit of the speaker as a marked feature of the lengthened imperative (2014, 71). Thus, per Fassberg's argument, the two forms would have to be mere stylistic variations, at least as far Dallaire reads the data.

In addition, Dallaire (2014, 71) intends to dismiss the directionality argument by claiming that "Commands are generally given with the interest of the speaker of mind." This, at the most basic level, is correct. It in no way disproves Fassberg's argument for directionality (1999, 12), however.

Fassberg, like JM, recognises the abundance of lengthened imperatives in Psalms. As mentioned, he entertains the idea of politeness, but is not persuaded. For one, the form occurs in various social directions. Dallaire (2014, 71) counters this by claiming politeness need not only or always be speech from a subordinate to a superior. Her retort is correct, if only anecdotal.[8]

## 1.3. Politeness

The next view we consider is marked politeness. This interpretation has received support by Stephen Kaufman (1991).[9] More recently, however, Kaufman's view on the origin and function of

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[8] Dallaire (2014, 71) states "Superior can also address subordinates with respect," and observes how in English a parent commands a child, both with urgency and with politeness. Noteworthy, however, is the added didactic factor in parent-child interaction, whereby the parent tries to teach the child proper social conventions. This is arguably different from biblical cases in which a superior commands an inferior using the lengthened imperative.

[9] So, for example, the passing comment in JM (§48.d) on the form being in some cases "honorific."

the lengthened imperative has been extensively defended by his aforementioned student, Hélène Dallaire. They understand the lengthened imperative and נָא (and also the cohortative) to derive from the form *yaqtulan(na)*. Dallaire (2014, 69) quotes her *Doktorvater* in support of the notion that the lengthened imperative marks a "softening rather than a strengthening!" (Kaufman 1991, 197).

Both Dallaire and Kaufman adduce data to support their view. For instance, the lengthened imperative does not appear in the so-called legal material of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. This, Dallaire claims, is because a "polite form of command is not compatible with legal material" (Dallaire 2014, 72; see also Kaufman 1989). The absence does not necessitate the inference. These data, nevertheless, are congenial to such an interpretation.

But there are some issues. First, much weight is put on the forms' 'origin story'. Their take on the historical form is certainly reasonable. It is, however, by no means certain—nor is it necessarily the most plausible.

Second, neither Dallaire nor Kaufman defines what 'politeness' is. Working with a rather intuitive sense of politeness in the philological task is complicated at best. The field of linguistic politeness, which I shall explicate in due course, has shown just how difficult it is to define politeness, impoliteness, and everything in between.

Third, and similar to the second, Kaufman (1991, 198) and Dallaire (2014, 69) find נָא and the lengthened imperative to be "essentially equivalent." Her statement of the problem and attempted solution is worth quoting:

> The emotional dispositions expressed in the passages where the long imperative appears with נָא are quite similar to those found in contexts where the regular imperative appears with נָא. But, since the particle נָא expresses respect or politeness and the long imperative is marked for polite commands, we assume that the combination of the two elements includes a level of modality superior to that found in contexts where only one of the two features is present. The more numerous the modal elements, the higher the level of modality. (Dallaire 2014, 73)

Dallaire is forced to admit the similarity in contexts. One way to maintain her position of politeness is, therefore, to argue on the level of *degree*.

Last and perhaps most confusingly, Dallaire's taxonomy of function for the long imperative + נָא includes such nuances as urgency (Num. 22.6), non-urgent request (2 Kgs 5.22), politeness (Gen. 32.30), and manipulative petition (Gen. 38.16). It is fair to say that one could find without much difficulty these nuances occurring with the regular imperative.[10] Moreover, the fact that both נָא and the lengthened imperative are considered separately as markers of politeness leaves the sub-category of 'politeness' (Gen. 32.30) dubious, at best.[11] On the whole, this view, while being persuasive at times, suffers more substantively from the

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[10] Shulman (2001), for example, understands the overall sense of the imperative to be urgency, as opposed to other forms, such as *weqaṭal*.

[11] Dallaire (2017, 161) repeats these exemplars, asserting "The long imperative with נָא no doubt increases the level of markedness or mitigation of the command."

lack of definition and linguistic rigour. What follows is a suggestion that attempts to overcome such infelicities.

## 2.0. Politeness in Scholarship

Every day is filled with politeness. Often, we intuitively sense when someone is polite or rude. In scholarship, however, definitions of politeness are "surprisingly elusive" (Ridealgh 2019, 56; cf. Grainger 2011, 167). Despite the lack of precision, the quest has yet to quell; politeness is a flourishing field of study (Nodoushan 2019, 109).

Before pressing too far into the subject, I need to be quite clear that 'politeness' does not denote customs and manners, per se. Rather, the topic at hand is the pragmatic research of linguistic politeness. To our benefit, this realm of politeness has been observed and analysed in detail, both in modern and ancient languages.[12]

In the last decade, politeness research has made its way into biblical studies in earnest (Pilch 2014). This is overall a positive sign. The scope, however, is typically restricted to narratives within the Hebrew Bible (Bridge 2011; 2016; 2019; Di Giulio 2007). This has left biblical poetry, especially Psalms, unattended. This lacuna provides opportunity for linguistic politeness study of the long imperative, especially given scholars' tendency to see the frequent form in Psalms as purely stylistic.

Below, I provide an overview of the complex world of politeness research and the precedents in historical politeness study

[12] Cf. the special issue of *Journal of Politeness Research* 12 (2016, 149–294).

that serve as catalysts. This essay utilises numerous areas within politeness studies. I begin with the most basic.

## 2.1. Linguistic Politeness

Brown and Levinson's ground-breaking work on linguistic politeness appeared in 1987 (see also Brown and Levinson 1978, 56–311). They developed a taxonomy of politeness that hinges on the concept of 'face'. At the most basic level, there is 'positive' face and 'negative' face. These terms are not necessarily common-sensical, however. The former, 'positive' face, emphasises the common ground between speaker and addressee. Here lies the desire for connection. 'Negative' face, on the other hand, concerns the speaker not imposing on the addressee (Mills and Grainger 2015, 5). This entails a certain level of autonomy.

Face-work is essential, Brown and Levinson observe, across the world's languages. Since their work, these concepts have become highly productive in crosslinguistic research. True, scholars have challenged, tweaked, and nuanced nearly every aspect of Brown and Levinson's programme (Fraser 2005; Werkhofer 2005; Mills 2011; Kádár, Parvaresh, and Reiter 2021). Yet, their work on 'face' still remains a critical and mainstream avenue for research (Mills and Grainger 2015, 4).

## 2.2. Face-work

In this essay, I observe the general contours of 'face' as outlined by Brown and Levinson. Specifically, I will survey the text and label positive and negative politeness strategies used by speakers.

For positive politeness strategy, a speaker may, for example, exaggerate for interest or sympathy, seek agreement, use in-group markers, give reasons and/or gifts, and assert reciprocity (Brown and Levinson 1987; Bridge 2019). A negative politeness strategy could entail questioning or hedging, showing deference, apologising, and minimising any 'face-threatening' actions (Brown and Levinson 1987; Bridge 2019).

## 2.3. Discernment

Beyond face-work, this essay includes discussion of additional linguistic politeness foci that have benefitted the study of ancient languages (Dickey 2016, 197; Ridealgh and Junker 2019, 65; Ridealgh 2021a, 127). One such focus is 'discernment'. Discernment in pragmatics is linguistic behaviour that "is socially and situationally appropriate and quasi mandatory and which closely reflects the social relationship between speaker and addressee, as well as the social and linguistic context within which the exchange takes place" (Ridealgh and Junker 2019, 56). A possible implication, for example, is that honorifics do not speak to face-wants of the addressee (so Brown and Levinson), but merely acknowledge the difference between speaker and addressee, particularly their power or authority.

In analysing ancient Hebrew, we will be mindful of the distinction in power between the psalmist, for example, and the addressee (God). What is more, we will be keen to observe how the language of the speaker might be mandatory in some way. In doing so, we would do well to recognise that the addressee is in fact

a deity and understood by the speaker as not simply another human. This reality, that is, speaking of/to a deity, rarely appears in politeness studies (Ridealgh 2021b, 61).[13]

Adopting the best of Brown and Levinson's theory, Ridealgh (2021b, 67) demonstrates the interconnection of face-work and discernment in the stark status differential between deity and speaker. Unlike the Egyptian literature cited by Ridealgh, however, the Hebrew Bible has a number of cases where the subordinate speaker criticises the deity. Thus, while we can find analogy to her programme, we must keep in front of mind the fact that ancient Egyptian hierarchy is not the same as that in ancient Hebrew (cf. Pss 13; 89).

## 2.4. Linguistic Ritual

Making use of multiple linguistic approaches, Ridealgh (2021b, 68) incorporates 'linguistic ritual' in her analysis. Linguistic ritual is a "recurrent action" that "re-enacts ideologies or ethos of relational network" (Terkourafi and Kádár 2017, 172). Relevant here is in-group ritual. This ritual, contra convention, includes a specific group in a social interaction and generates a response (Ridealgh 2021b, 70). Moreover, and to our interest, linguistic ritual can incite "intense emotions and affect" (Terkourafi and Kádár 2017, 172). Beyond this, it promotes close social connections.

One notable absence in traditional face-work study that sensitivity to linguistic ritual helps correct is the consideration of

[13] Yet, as a leading expert in historical linguistic politeness, Ridealgh has paved the way for the exploration of divine and human communication in the Hebrew Bible.

face-enhancing activities. These acts are rightly seen as significant in the ancient world writ large (Ridealgh 2021b, 65). These include actions such as statements of offerings and uttering a divine name. In this inclusion, Ridealgh (2021b, 63) emphasises the communication within the historical data, rather than the "mechanisms of religion itself."

## 3.0. The Lengthened Imperative and Linguistic Politeness

Here we take note of how the long imperative assists in the maintenance or saving of face by way of positive and negative politeness strategies.

### 3.1. Lengthened Imperative with נָא and -לְ

The lengthened imperative appears frequently with נָא and -ל + first-person suffix.[14]

(6) וְעַתָּה֙ שָׂא־נָ֣א כֵלֶ֔יךָ תֶּלְיְךָ֖ וְקַשְׁתֶּ֑ךָ וְצֵ֤א הַשָּׂדֶה֙ וְצ֣וּדָה לִ֔י צַ֖יִד (ק'; כ': צידה):
'Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and hunt game for me.' (Gen. 27.3)

The particle נָא occurs early in (6). The benefactive לִי follows the long imperative וְצ֣וּדָה. It is within reason that this imperative is lengthened to attain euphony with the *ketiv* object צידה.[15] However, the use of נָא and the context of desperation demonstrate face-work via *positive politeness*.

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[14] Gen. 25.31; 27.7, 19, 21; 38:16; Num. 22.17; 23.27; Judg. 16.10; 1 Sam. 9.18; 10.15; 25.8; 30.7; 2 Kgs 4.22; 5.22; 8.4; Jer. 38.25; Jon. 1.8.

[15] Equally, this could fit well with the directional / benefactive view.

(7) וַתֹּאמֶר דְּלִילָה אֶל־שִׁמְשׁוֹן הַגִּֽידָה־נָּא לִּי בַּמֶּה כֹּחֲךָ גָדוֹל
'So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me what makes your strength so great."' (Judg. 16.6a)

Here in close proximity, we find the long imperative, נָא, and the benefactive לִּי. To be sure, הִגִּיד frequently has -ל to denote the addressee (e.g., Deut. 4.13; 5.5; 1 Kgs 1.20; Isa. 41.22). This could comport with Fassberg's (1999) taxonomy, but the presence of נָא and the clear attempt to persuade suggest the lengthened imperative, if directional, also marks politeness (cf. Jer. 38.25; Jon. 1.8).

(8) אָנָּא אֲדֹנָי תְּהִי נָא אָזְנְךָ־קַשֻּׁבָת אֶל־תְּפִלַּת עַבְדְּךָ וְאֶל־תְּפִלַּת עֲבָדֶיךָ הַֽחֲפֵצִים לְיִרְאָה אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ וְהַצְלִֽיחָה־נָּא לְעַבְדְּךָ הַיּוֹם וּתְנֵהוּ לְרַחֲמִים לִפְנֵי הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה
'O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man!"' (Neh. 1.11a–b)[16]

The frequent use of נָא, notes of deference (עַבְדְּךָ), and the clear and urgent need press beyond any directional explanation. The context and use of the long imperative suggest *positive and negative politeness*.[17]

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[16] While this is an example of Late Biblical Hebrew, it is unclear (to me) at this point if there is any diachronic development in the function of the long imperative and/or נָא.

[17] This, of course, takes נָא as having a mitigating/deferential function. And while this may be the majority/traditional view in scholarship and in Talmudic interpretation, it is not the only view: נָא is taken by some scholars to be a marker of logical consequence, 'then, thus, so then, in

### 3.2. Lengthened Imperative with נָא

Only occasionally does the long imperative appear with נָא, but without a directional.[18] However, the direction or benefit is typically presumed by way of common ground between the speaker and addressee.

(9) אָנְּא יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא אָנְּא יְהוָה הַצְלִיחָה נָּא׃
'Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success!' (Ps. 118.25)

The psalm as a whole and the particular opening and closing of the A and B lines of v. 25 do more than just hint that the long imperative connotes something more than euphony or directionality. The stacking of אָנְּא, נָּא, and the long imperative presents strong evidence for *positive politeness*.[19] Here is an overlap in my research and Fassberg's (1999) so-called indirect relation.

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that case' (Lambdin 1971, 170–71; Waltke and O'Connor 1990, §37.4a; Fassberg 1994, 70–71), which is how it is translated in some of the Targums and the LXX. In other words, my analysis above is plausible, but not definitive.

[18] Judg. 19.11; Job 17.3; 33.1; Ecc. 2.1.

[19] Goldingay (2008, 362) illustrates the politeness strategy nicely without recourse to 'please': "Oh now, Yhwh, do deliver; oh now, Yhwh, do give success".

This, to be sure, is not to equivocate the semantics of אָנְּא and נָּא, but to suggest that they are used, as here, to draw sympathy, express urgency, and stress dependency on the addressee, all of which are ways of maintaining, as well as not infringing upon, the face of the addressee (positive politeness). Such linguistic deployment is for the sake of securing the desired response from the addressee, in this case, God. Waltke and O'Connor (1990, 40.2.5a–c), drawing on Lambdin, find אָנְּא to be very

### 3.3. Lengthened Imperative without נָא

The most frequently occurring pattern is the lengthened imperative without נָא.[20] This seems to be the best proving ground for whether the imperative itself can mark politeness.[21] Indeed, it is here that linguistic politeness plays a significant role in interpreting the contextual features.

(10) תְּנָה אֶת־נָשַׁי וְאֶת־יְלָדַי אֲשֶׁר עָבַדְתִּי אֹתְךָ בָּהֶן וְאֵלֵכָה כִּי אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ אֶת־עֲבֹדָתִי אֲשֶׁר עֲבַדְתִּיךָ׃

"'Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know very well the service I have given you.'" (Gen. 30.26)

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similar to נָא in having to do with a logical consequence. Notably, they mention אָנָּא in their discussion of "*cries or impolite utterances*," as well as exclamations that are "*polite*," though they do not consider the particles at hand to mark politeness.

[20] Gen. 27.4; 29.15; 30.28; 37.13; 42.37; 43.8; Exod. 32.10; Num. 10.29, 35; 11.13, 16; 22.6, 11; 23.7; Deut. 26.15; Josh. 10.6; 14.12; 15.19; Judg. 4.18; 11.6, 13; 14.12; 16.26; 17.10; 1 Sam. 8.15; 9.26; 14.6; 16.11; 17.44; 20.11; 22.23; 23.27; 24.22; 30.15; 2 Sam. 3.12, 14; 1 Kgs 13.7; 15.19; 21.6; 2 Kgs 14.8; Isa. 44.22; Jer. 49.11; Hos. 14.2; Joel 2.17; Pss. 4.7; 5.2; 6.5; 7.7; 9.20; 12.2; 17.1, 13; 20.10; 21.14; 22.20; 25.20; 28.9; 31.17; 35.23; 38.23; 39.13; 40.14; 41.5; 44.27; 50.7; 54.4; 55.2; 56.9; 57.12; 59.5; 60.7; 61.12; 68.29; 69.19; 70.6; 74.3; 78.1; 82.8; 84.9; 86.2, 6, 16; 90.13; 102.2; 108.6; 116.4; 119.149; 120.2; 140.7; 141.1; 142.7; Job 33.5; 34.16; Prov. 1.11; 4.20; 5.1; 23.26; Ruth 4.4; Songs 1.7; 7.12; Lam. 1.11; 2.20; 3.59, 63; Neh. 5.19; 6.7, 14; 13.14, 22, 29, 31; 1 Chron. 21.22, 29.18.

[21] This occurs with and without -לִי.

While the imperative תְּנָה may for a moment lend to the directionality taxonomy, it needs to be clear that the lexeme (נָתַן) typically takes -ל (e.g., Exod. 5.7, 10; 13.5, 11; 17.2; Num. 11.13, 18, 21; 21.16).[22] One observes several features here pertinent to linguistic politeness: the reason for giving (תְּנָה) is so that he may go (וְאֵלֵכָה); common ground is made explicit within the כִּי clause (אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ); reciprocity in relationship (עָבַדְתִּי אִתְּךָ בָּהֵן). These are all features of a *positive politeness* strategy.

(11) הֵמָּה בָּאוּ בְּאֶרֶץ צוּף וְשָׁאוּל אָמַר לְנַעַרוֹ אֲשֶׁר־עִמּוֹ לְכָה וְנָשׁוּבָה פֶּן־יֶחְדַּל אָבִי מִן־הָאֲתֹנוֹת וְדָאַג לָנוּ׃

‘When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to the boy who was with him, “Let us turn back, or my father will stop worrying about the donkeys and worry about us.”’ (1 Sam. 9.5)

One might want to dismiss (11) as politeness because Saul is speaking to his servant (so Fassberg 1999). Yet the general awareness of superiors speaking politely to subordinates has already been noted (Dallaire 2014). Notably, the translation above forgoes לְכָה ‘come’ (e.g., *ESV*; *KJV*).[23]

To my interest, Saul uses a hypothetical that hinges on sympathy: פֶּן־יֶחְדַּל אָבִי מִן־הָאֲתֹנוֹת וְדָאַג לָנוּ. This is a mixture of *negative* and *positive politeness*.

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[22] This includes לְ + first-person suffix. See, for example, Isa. 50.4; Exod. 22.28, 29. In imperative (short, second person form): Gen. 14.21; 2 Chon. 1.10; plural imperative: Gen. 23.4; Exod. 17.2; 1 Sam. 17.10.

[23] Nonetheless, my argument does not concern translation, but the pragmatic force of persuasion and face-work.

(12) וַיְדַבֵּר אַחְאָב אֶל־נָבוֹת | לֵאמֹר | תְּנָה־לִּי אֶת־כַּרְמְךָ וְיִהְיֶה־לִּי לְגַן־יָרָק כִּי הִוא קְרֹבָה אֵצֶל בֵּיתִי וְאֶתְּנָה לְךָ תַּחְתָּיו כֶּרֶם טֹוב מִמֶּנּוּ אִם טֹוב בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֶתְּנָה־לְךָ כֶּסֶף מְחִיר זֶה׃

‘And Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard, so that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house; I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money.”’ (1 Kgs 21.2)

Ahab is far from a commendable character in the book of Kings. Nevertheless, his speech includes a long imperative (תְּנָה) and numerous features of linguistic politeness. The latter include: the purpose of the giving (וְיִהְיֶה־לִּי לְגַן־יָרָק); the reason for request/demand (כִּי הִוא קְרֹבָה אֵצֶל בֵּיתִי); reciprocity (וְאֶתְּנָה לְךָ תַּחְתָּיו כֶּרֶם טֹוב מִמֶּנּוּ); conditionality (אִם טֹוב בְּעֵינֶיךָ). Specifically, these are all *positive politeness* features that maintain face.

(13) קוּמָה יְהוָה | הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי אֱלֹהַי כִּי־הִכִּיתָ אֶת־כָּל־אֹיְבַי לֶחִי שִׁנֵּי רְשָׁעִים שִׁבַּרְתָּ׃

‘Rise up, O LORD! Deliver me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked.’ (Ps. 3.8)

The psalmist waits till v. 8 to make an explicit plea. Before that, the psalm is filled with common ground, markers of relationship (אֲנִי שָׁכַבְתִּי וָאִישָׁנָה הֱקִיצֹותִי כִּי יְהוָה יִסְמְכֵנִי v. 6), and expressions of trust (e.g., וְאַתָּה יְהוָה מָגֵן בַּעֲדִי v. 4), all of which contribute to *positive politeness*. Following the plea initiated by the long imperative, the psalmist gives a reason in which common ground of past relation is once again laid out: כִּי־הִכִּיתָ אֶת־כָּל־אֹיְבַי. Thus, even when the direct plea is made in v. 8, it is immediately followed by *positive politeness*.

(14) הַבִּיטָה עֲנֵנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהָי הָאִירָה עֵינַי פֶּן־אִישַׁן הַמָּוֶת׃
‘Consider and answer me, O LORD my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death.’ (Ps. 13.4)

The second imperative “answer me” secures the fact that the psalmist is the implied object of הַבִּיטָה. That might move toward the directionality argument of Fassberg (1999). As above, however, the context for linguistic politeness puts forward a different explanation of the long imperative. For example, the A line concludes not only with the divine name (יְהוָה), which could be considered a polite use or could simply be part of linguistic ritual (§§2.2–2.4), but also with ‘*my* God’ (אֱלֹהָי). The designation of relationship is quite conducive to face-work. Moreover, the B line, which contains a second-long imperative (הָאִירָה), heightens the intensity by concluding with a hypothetical that highlights the worst possible outcome: פֶּן־אִישַׁן הַמָּוֶת.[24] Such is typical for garnering sympathy from the addressee. Significantly, the addressee in this case is understood by the psalmist to be one who can resolve the dire situation.

(15) וַיֹּאמֶר סוּרָה שְׁבָה־פֹּה פְּלֹנִי אַלְמֹנִי וַיָּסַר וַיֵּשֶׁב׃
‘So Boaz said, “Come over, friend; sit down here.” And he went over and sat down.’ (Ruth 4.1b)

As before, we might be persuaded that the first long imperative (סוּרָה) is for directionality. Linguistic politeness is, nevertheless, a more felicitous explanation. It is plain that Boaz wants

[24] Kraus (1993, 215) notes here the “imperatives are ultimate extreme cries for help…. The petitioner… now prays for God’s sympathy and attention”.

to convince הַגֹּאֵל.[25] Given that, the use of the long imperative seems to be more than purely directional. Put positively, the use of the lengthened imperative seems part of the rhetorical purpose of the speech: soft and congenial directives that maintain, if not enhance, one's 'face'.

## 3.4. Directionality and Difficult Cases

There are examples that give the politeness interpretation difficulty. Some fit the directionality taxonomy because of לִי, or appear (almost) exclusively in long form, or perhaps do not seem to co-occur with any politeness strategy (cf. Gen. 47.31).

For instance, the imperative הָבָה balks at a politeness rendering.[26] Nevertheless, several occurrences have a stated reason (Gen. 29.21; 1 Sam. 14.41; Ps. 60.13), or are followed by נָא (Gen. 38.16) or פֶּן 'lest' (Exod. 1.10), all of which can serve a *positive politeness* strategy. Perhaps the strongest example of politeness

[25] Eskenazi and Fryer-Kensy (2011, 71) seem to have it right that these imperatives are an "invitation" and find it possible to translate the speech as "Would you come over and sit down?" The situation is, of course, complicated. Boaz is informing the closer relative of his obligation, but does not actually want the relative to perform the obligation. There are competing factors here. Nonetheless, maintaining one's face as opposed to giving purely directional directives still is a means to that end.

[26] Cf. לְכָה (JM §48.d), yet, the long form is notably followed by cohortatives (Gen. 31.44; Num. 6.2, 7; 1 Sam. 9.5; 14.1, 6; 17.44; 2 Kgs 14.8; Prov. 1.11), also a preceding question (Gen. 37.13), with נָא (Num. 22.6; Eccl. 2.1; cf. Jenni 2012), and, most especially, a hedging hypothetical (Num. 22.11).

with הָבָה is (16), as an attempt at culling sympathy in the latter two clauses (cf. Gen. 30.1).

(16) וַיִּתֹּם הַכֶּסֶף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּמֵאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ כָל־מִצְרַיִם אֶל־יוֹסֵף לֵאמֹר הָבָה־לָּנוּ לֶחֶם וְלָמָּה נָמוּת נֶגְדֶּךָ כִּי אָפֵס כָּסֶף׃

'When the money from the land of Egypt and from the land of Canaan was spent, all the Egyptians came to Joseph, and said, "Give us food! Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone."' (Gen. 47.15)

Others, such as עוּרָה (Ps. 7.7; 44.24; 57.9; 59.5; 108.3), may be euphonic (JM §48.d) or "fixed" (Waltke and O'Connor 1990, §34.4). Those conclusions, however, do not completely satisfy occurrences that are, yes, in poetry (cf. Tsevat 1955), but more importantly filled with sympathy, social markers, and vows (Ps. 57.6–11).

## 4.0. Conclusion

This essay has argued that the long imperative is indeed a salient part of BH grammar (so Fassberg 1999). What is more, it has on a number of occasions found agreement with observations of directionality and euphony. Nevertheless, the contribution of the form is to mark politeness. Taking the form as part of a politeness strategy allows the fine observations of Fassberg on the concrete and metaphorical direction to stand. Thus, this essay has done without the claim for mutual exclusivity: politeness *or* directionality. Furthermore, it has left the question of the historical origin of the form open. The essay refrained from arguing for the use of politeness by degrees (so Dallaire), which is debated amongst

scholars researching politeness, but rather contended for the utilisation of multiple linguistic features for a politeness strategy—the long imperative being only one.

Politeness is by no means simple. The present study has not sought a narrow or ad hoc definition of politeness. An appeal to the translation of 'please' and its near synonyms has not been made. Rather, on the basis of current and ongoing research on linguistic politeness, we have noted the contextual features of face-work throughout the Hebrew Bible.

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# LEXIS-CODING ORTHOGRAPHY IN 4QISA$^{M}$ (4Q66)*

*Noam Mizrahi*

Five fragments were assigned to 4QIsa$^{m}$ (or 4Q66), dated on palaeographic grounds to the first half of the first century BCE (Skehan and Ulrich 1997, 131–32 and pl. XXII; cf. Lange 2009, 173–274). However, fragments 1–3, which preserve words from six lines (containing Isa. 60.20–61.1), differ in terms of size, colour, shape, and, perhaps, scribal hand, from fragments 4–5, which contain the ends of five lines (covering Isa. 61.3–6). It remains uncertain, therefore, whether the two groups of fragments indeed belong together (as proposed by Eugene Ulrich) or rather represent two different manuscripts (as originally surmised by Patrick Skehan).

The present study focuses on fragments 4–5. They witness two variant readings vis-à-vis the MT in vv. 3 and 5 (lns 2 and 4,

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respectively), and this paper is concerned with the first variant, which entails a scribal correction:

*top margin*

1 [נקם לאלהינו לנחם כל אבלים [3] לשום לאבלי ציון ]לֹתֵת להם פאר תחת אפרֹ
2 [שמן ששון תחת אבל מעטה תהלה תחת רוח כהה וק]רֹא להם א׳לי הצדֹק
3 [מטע יהוה להתפאר [4] ובנו חרבות עולם שממות ראשני]ם יקוֹמְמוֹ וְחִדְשׁוֹ עָרֵי
4 [חרב שממות דור ודור [5] ועמדו זרים ורעו צאנ..ם ובני ]נכר אִכריהֶם
5 [וכרמי..ם [6] ואתם כהני יהוה תקראו משרתי אלהינו י]אֹמַר לָ[כם חי]ל

Figures 1 and 2: 4Q66, fragments 4–5: Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority

Figure 1
PAM 43.014
Photograph: Najib Anton Albina
(July 1959)

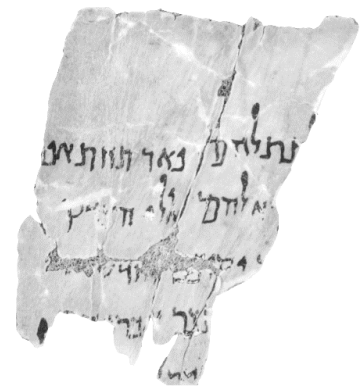

Figure 2
IAA B-362297 (digitally enhanced)
Photograph: Shai Halevi
(June 2012)

At first glance, the added *yod* in א׳לי הצדק (ln. 2) seems a relatively small, even insignificant, detail. It is usually construed as

a mere orthographic correction.[1] All the more so, since the scribal hand of the corrector is usually identified as that of the original scribe (Skehan and Ulrich 1997, 131; cf. Lange 2009, 273).

Nonetheless, if one seriously reflects on the question of *why* this variant occurs *where* it does, then even this tiny detail, when contextualised text-critically, may be interpretable as a manifestation of broader late Second Temple exegetical concern regarding interpretation of the phrase אֵילֵי הַצֶּדֶק in Isa. 61.3. This exegetical debate also has implications for Biblical Hebrew (BH) lexicography, as it reveals an ancient debate about the very existence of a rare lexeme.

Isa. 61.3 is a particularly attractive passage for Second Temple scholars, of course, because Isa. 61.1–3 have a well-documented reception history as a messianic prooftext in the Qumran scrolls, especially 4Q521 and 11Q13 (see especially Sanders 1975; Collins 1997; for 11Q13, see Miller 1969; Achenbach 2015), and the New Testament, especially Luke 4 (see, e.g., Flusser 1960; Neirynck 1997; Rosik and Onwukeme 2002). Previous discussions of the reception of v. 3, however, are generally limited to its first part (v. 3a).[2] A study of ancient interpretations

[1] Such an assessment would explain why this reading was left out of Parry's (2020) comprehensive discussion of the textual variants witnessed by the Isaiah scrolls. Morrow (1973, 161) records the variant, but does not discuss it.

[2] Tellingly, even the comprehensive work of Metzenthin (2010) excludes a discussion of Isa. 61.3b, though the passage Isa. 61.1ff. is referred to several times. Similarly, none of the passages pertinent to the case under investigation are discussed by Koenig (1982) or Pulikottil (2001), who previously explored exegetical trends in 1QIsa$^{a}$.

of v. 3b, which contains the phrase אֵילֵי הַצֶּדֶק, thus fills a lacuna in our existing knowledge.

## 1.0. Orthography and Linguistic Marking

Scrutiny of this case should be framed by a preliminary, theoretical consideration of orthography.[3]

The alphabetic writing system of both ancient and Modern Hebrew is quite exceptional among the world's written languages, in permitting the coexistence of a relatively broad spectrum of orthographic representations of speech segments. A random example from Qumran Hebrew is furnished by the feminine singular demonstrative זאת 'this', the rounded middle vowel of which is spelled in 1QIsa[a] in at least three different ways in addition to the MT's זאת—זאות, זואת, זות—with subsequent corrections that yield even more spellings, e.g., זו֯ות:

| MT | | 1QIsa[a] | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Isa. 5.25 | בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁב אַפּוֹ | 5.13–14 | בכול זאות לוא שב אפו |
| Isa. 9.16 | בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁב אַפּוֹ | 9.7 | בכול זואת לוא שב אפו |
| Isa. 14.26 | וְזֹאת הָעֵצָה הַיְּעוּצָה עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ | 12.28–29 | זואת העצה היעוצה על כול האֹרץ |
| | וְזֹאת הַיָּד הַנְּטוּיָה עַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם: | | וזות היד הנטו֯יה על כול הגואים |

In the above cases, the orthographic variation occurs in the same recurring formula or within one and the same context, so diverse

[3] Barr (1989) remains indispensable for any theoretical exploration of BH orthography. Significantly, Khan (2018) demonstrates that the common, unidirectional perception of orthography as mere representation of speech is too simplistic, as orthoepy results in attempts at the phonetic realisation of orthographic and other notational peculiarities. For the notion of "orthographic knowledge" and its complex interaction with psycholinguistic factors, see Berninger (1994; 1995).

functional values are unlikely to underlie the different spellings. Experience shows, however, that, in time, competing spellings of this sort can become functionally differentiated. Illustrations for this phenomenon may be adduced from Modern Hebrew.

An example of sociolinguistic values attached to competing spellings is furnished by the stylistic coding expressed by one's preferred orthography. Generally speaking, defective spellings, e.g., שלש *šaˈloš* 'three', of segolate nouns of the type of פעל ˈ*poʿal* 'verb', and of words traditionally written with *ḥaṭef qamets*, like צהרים *ṣohorˈayim* 'noon', are associated with old-fashioned, archaic, or even archaistic style, because they represent an orthographic standard established on the basis of BH, which was enforced throughout the Israeli educational system until the early 1980s. By contrast, *plene* spellings, e.g., שלוש, פועל, צוהוריים, are considered to represent a 'younger' and more up-to-date style. Tellingly, despite recent approval and even promotion by the Academy of the Hebrew Language,[4] older literati tend to view some of the more modern conventions with contempt as vulgar spellings.

Another example, this time of distinct linguistic values attached to competing spellings, is supplied by the Hebrew word for '(Jewish) priest'. In contemporary, written Israeli Hebrew, the *plene* spelling כוהן is automatically decoded by native speakers as

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[4] See https://hebrew-academy.org.il/topic/hahlatot/missingvocalizationspelling/ (Rule II: The /o/ Vowel), and the accompanying press release at https://hebrew-academy.org.il/2017/06/17/כללי-הכתיב-המלא-הכללים-החדשים-סיוון/, highlighting frequent words whose prescribed spelling was reformed.

marking the common noun and accordingly pronounced with ultimate stress: [koˈhen]. By contrast, the default decoding of the defective spelling כהן is as the proper noun (i.e., surname) 'Cohen', which is accordingly pronounced with penultimate stress: [ˈkohen]. The orthographic variants, encoding a distinction in grammatical category, are given to different phonetic realisations.

A final example illustrates that orthographic variants may be used for distinguishing between contrasting lexemes. Modern Hebrew inherited two words that were originally pronounced differently: מִלָּה *milˈlɔ* 'word' and מִילָה *mīˈlɔ* 'circumcision'. Due to the loss of both vocalic length and consonantal gemination in Israeli Hebrew, however, their pronunciation merged into [miˈla]. Nonetheless, one can discern a strong tendency among authors to retain the defective spelling for 'word', while maintaining the *plene* spelling for 'circumcision', in order to distinguish orthographically between the two lexemes—a tendency that is now eroding due to the equally strong tendency among younger generations to prefer *plene* orthography across the board.[5]

To be sure, I do not argue that such cultural constructs should be retrojected, wholesale, onto ancient Hebrew texts. Moreover, orthographic fluctuation is amply recorded in both the Dead Sea Scrolls and medieval codices of the Hebrew Bible.[6]

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[5] The differentiated spellings of *plene* אישה (= אִישָׁהּ *ʾīˈšɔh*) 'her man (i.e., husband)' and defective אשה (= אִשָּׁה < *ʾiššˈɔ*) 'woman', both realised in Modern Hebrew as [ʾiša], are undergoing a comparable process.

[6] Examples pertinent to the word under investigation can be culled from both corpora. Qimron (2018, 66–67) records cases of the *plene* spelling

What I insist on, rather, is that we be aware that competing spellings could have, at least in some cases, signalled differentiated linguistic or sociolinguistic values for ancient readers and scribes. It would be wrong, therefore, to dismiss them out of hand.

The methodological problem that remains is how, in the absence of ancient Hebrew native speakers or literati, to distinguish between variants that are purely orthographic, on the one hand, and those that are functionally differentiated, on the other. In the case of the biblical scrolls from Qumran, however, one may have recourse to an external control, namely, the ancient versions. The very necessity of translating the Bible into other languages carries with it the potential for revealing such functional linguistic differences, and comparative analysis of the various translations into Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Jewish Aramaic enables one to discern at least some cases in which seemingly orthographic variants might have been perceived by ancient readers as marking linguistically distinct values, especially in the realm of lexis. Put differently, if the Hebrew textual witnesses vary with

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of 'gods' (e.g., ומי בבני האילים 4Q381 15.6), contrary to the MT's consistent preference for the defective spelling of this word (e.g., בִּבְנֵי אֵלִים MT Ps. 89.7). He also notes examples of the other direction: cases of defective spelling of 'rams' (אלים, especially in 11QT$^{a}$), whereas the MT shows a clear preference for representing its first vowel with a *yod* (67 occurrences of אֵיל(י)ם versus only two of אֵלִים). Similarly, the critical editions of Kennicott (1776–1780) and Ginsburg (1908–1913) testify to many orthographic variants in medieval codices with respect to these words, though most of the collated manuscripts are relatively late and otherwise deviate very often from the received orthography underlying the Masoretic notes of the early authorities.

respect to the orthographic representation of a certain word, but all the versions essentially agree on its translation, then the variation may very well be purely orthographic. But if the versions reflect different lexical identifications, or widely disparate understandings of the word, then it is legitimate to explore the possibility that orthographic variation entailed linguistic differentiation.

Another group of potential cases of linguistically functional orthographic variants can be identified in the case of intentional corrections of orthographic variants. Why would a corrector intervene in an existing written text, adding or deleting a vowel letter, if it makes no difference to interpreting the word in question? Theoretically, the scribe may have corrected an error in copying his *Vorlage*, or possibly tried to clarify an original form that was difficult to read or interpret for any number of potential reasons. More specifically, such scribal interventions make sense if the corrected form was thought to be functionally different from the original one, even if this function is not immediately apparent to modern readers. In other words, orthographic corrections might be a means of interpretive explication, thereby injecting what I call 'micro-exegesis' into the textual fabric of a transmitted work.

If a given case satisfies both criteria, namely, exhibiting an explicit correction by a Hebrew scribe, while also corresponding to divergent renderings in the ancient versions, then the consideration of its orthography as a means of marking a linguistically functional distinction becomes plausible.

## 2.0. Common Interpretation

It is against this background that I propose that the superlinear *yod* in אי֯לי partially disambiguates the lexical identity of a word given to various interpretations. The exegetical crux with which the scribe was wrestling can be clarified with the help of the ancient versions.

Isa. 61.1–4 describes how the currently miserable state of the Judaean returnees will take a turn for the better; in the future, those who are now "the mourners of Zion" (אֲבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן) will be given a new designation: אֵילֵי הַצֶּדֶק.[7] Modern scholarship, relying on medieval lexicography and exegesis, usually interprets this phrase like the *NRSV*: "the oaks of righteousness."[8] This line of interpretation assumes that the unattested, singular form **ʾayl* or **ʾēl* is the masculine counterpart of the feminine אֵלָה *ʾēlâ* 'terebinth tree'.[9]

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[7] On thematic and syntactic grounds, vv. 1–4 can be subdivided into an introduction (v. 1a), a list of infinitival clauses (vv. 1b–3a), the new designation (v. 3b), and the restoration of the towns (v. 4). This division can also be supported by colometrical analysis (de Vries 2013), even without adhering to all its strictures. The compositional interaction of these sections with each other, with various passages of Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah, and with additional passages, especially of the Restoration Period, is a complicated matter that cannot be addressed here. See, e.g., Gregory (2007); Stromberg (2009).

[8] See, in addition to the commentaries and lexica, Gignilliat (2011).

[9] In the Hebrew Bible, the terebinth is sometimes associated with sacred or ritual sites (e.g., Gen. 35.4; Judg. 6.11, 19; 1 Kgs 13.14; Ezek. 6.13; Hos. 4.13; 1 Chron. 10.12; notably, Josh. 24.26 testifies to the geminated biform אַלָּה). A few other occurrences, however, demonstrate that

An augmented form of the masculine noun apparently underlies אֵלוֹן *ʾēlōn* ‘oak’, employed in place names or designations of sacred sites.[10]

## 3.0. The Versions

This interpretation of the masculine plural אֵ(י)לִים, or construct אֵ(י)לֵי, has been applied to a few other BH passages.[11] Intriguingly,

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it was also typical of the local Palestinian flora (2 Sam. 18.9, 10, 14; Isa. 1.30; 6.13).

[10] The geminated biform אַלּוֹן *ʾallōn*, sometimes mentioned in juxtaposition to אֵלָה (Isa. 6.13; Hos. 4.13), functions as a common name, designating oaks or terebinth trees (Gen. 35.8; Isa. 2.13; 44.14; Ezek. 27.6; Amos 2.9; Zech. 11.2). Historically, it appears that Hebrew אֵלוֹן *ʾēlōn* is cognate of Aramaic אִילָן *ʾīlכn* ‘tree’, both being derived from Proto-Northwest Semitic **ʾiylān*. While the specific sense of ‘oak’ (i.e., a particular kind of tree) was preserved in Hebrew, as demonstrated by the fact that the same sense is witnessed by other Semitic languages (see Ugaritic *aln* and Akkadian *allānu*, from Old Akkadian on), in Aramaic it underwent semantic extension to the broader sense of ‘tree’.

[11] For instance, both the BDB and *HALOT* assign the meaning of ‘tree’ in Isa. 1.29; 57.5; 61.3; Ezek. 31.14, as well as in the place name אֵיל פָּארָן (Gen. 14.6) (BDB 18a, s.v. $_{IV}$[?אַיִל]; *HALOT* 40a, s.v. $_{II}$אַיִל*). For our present concern, it is immaterial whether the passages discussed above are—from a literary point of view—independent or intertextually related (as suggested by, e.g., Jüngling 1993, esp. 214–16).

however, the ancient versions very rarely agree with this interpretation, preferring instead a different understanding of the word.[12] This is best exemplified by Isa. 57.5:

(1) Isa. 57.5

MT הַנֶּחָמִים בָּאֵלִּים תַּחַת כָּל־עֵץ רַעֲנָן
'You that burn with lust among the oaks, under every green tree'

1QIsa$^{a}$ הנחמים באלים תחת כול עץ רענן

LXX οἱ παρακαλοῦντες ἐπὶ τὰ εἴδωλα ὑπὸ δένδρα δασέα
'You are the ones who call on their idols under thick trees'

Vulg *qui consolamini in diis subter omne lignum frondosum*
'Who seek your comfort in idols under every green tree…?'

Pesh ܕܡܬܪܥܝܢ ܒܛܥܘܬܐ ܬܚܝܬ ܟܠ ܐܝܠܢ ܪܥܝܢ
'Who are comforted by idols, beneath every forest tree'

TJ דְּפָלְחִין לְטָעֲוָתָא תְּחוֹת כָּל אִילָן עַבּוֹף
'who serve idols under every leafy tree'

Clearly, all the versions take the word in question as the plural of אֵל 'god' (as explicitly translated by the Vulgate), even if most of them interpret this term as actually referring to false gods or 'idols' (so the Septuagint, Peshiṭta, and Targum Jonathan).[13] This is due primarily to the context, which employs the formulaic

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[12] The English translations are taken from the *NRSV* (MT), *NETS* (LXX), Douay-Rheims-Challoner (Vulgate), Greenberg and Walter (2012; Peshiṭta), Stenning (1949; Targum Jonathan; cf. Chilton 1987).

[13] This translational equivalent is not self-evident. It is not employed by the versions even in passages that clearly attest אֵל in the sense of 'idol' (e.g., Isa. 44.10, 15, 17). In the Septuagint, for instance, εἴδωλον translates אֵל only in the passages discussed above, even though εἴδωλον is used for translating the related terms אֱלֹהַּ and אֱלִיל.

phrase “under every green tree,” commonly denoting an illicit locus of idolatrous worship in Deuteronomistic phraseology.[14]

Arguably, not only the context, but also the defective spelling—which is the rule in the case of the plural form of אֵל in the sense ‘god, divine being, angel’[15]—has facilitated this understanding of the word אלים in a passage that most modern lexica take to mean ‘terebinth trees’.[16]

If so, one may begin to understand why a Second Temple scribe would consider it essential to distinguish orthographically between the defective and *plene* spellings of אלי/אילי הצדק in Isa. 61.3.[17] If the head noun is read as the plural of אֵל ‘god’, then the entire phrase could be taken as a pluralised form of the divine epithet אֱלֹהֵי צִדְקִי (Ps. 4.2), implying that the prophet boldly en-

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[14] Deut. 12.2; 1 Kgs 14.23; 2 Kgs 16.4 || 2 Chron. 28.4; 17.10; Jer. 2.20; 3.6, 13; 17.2; Ezek. 6.13.

[15] In Qumran Hebrew, the term אלים (also spelled אילים) can refer to angelic beings, as is evident from its antithetic parallelism with אנשים ‘people, humans’ (e.g., 1QM 1.10–11; 4Q511 10.11). Similarly, אֵל is translated once in the Septuagint as ἄγγελος (Job 20.15).

[16] Note that in this particular case, the orthography of the word is safeguarded in the Aleppo Codex by a Masoretic note that compares it to the homographic באלים in Exod. 15.11. Accordingly, Ginsburg (1911, 79) records no manuscript exhibiting *plene* orthography. By contrast, Kennicott (1780, 73) records many *plene* spellings, but this only testifies to the inferior quality of his sources, from a Masoretic point of view.

[17] As far as I am aware, the only scholar who previously entertained this line of thinking—albeit hesitantly, and with no recourse to 4Q66, which was as yet unpublished—is Sanders (1975, 84–85 [=2019, 51]).

dows the Judaean returnees with qualities and titles that are elsewhere reserved exclusively for God. Whether or not the passage makes such a theological assertion is an exegetical matter that merits scribal explication, especially in light of the messianic matrix in which the entire passage of Isa. 61.1–4 was interpreted in the late Second Temple Period.

In Isa. 1.29, the versions treat the word אֵ(י)לִים similarly to how they do in Isa. 57.5:

(2) Isa. 1.29

MT כִּי יֵבֹשׁוּ מֵאֵילִים אֲשֶׁר חִמַּדְתֶּם
'For you shall be ashamed of the oaks in which you delighted'

1QIsa$^{a}$ כיא יבושו מאלים אשר חמדתם

LXX διότι αἰσχυνθήσονται ἐπὶ τοῖς εἰδώλοις αὐτῶν, ἃ αὐτοὶ ἠβούλοντο
'For they shall be ashamed because of their idols, which they themselves wanted'

Vulg *confundentur enim ab idolis quibus sacrificaverunt*
'For they shall be confounded for the idols, to which they have sacrificed'

Pesh ܡܟܠ ܕܚܡܕܬ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܐܝܕܠܐ ܕܒܚ ܠܗ
'For they will be ashamed of the idols that they coveted'

TJ אֲרֵי תִבְהתוּן מֵאֵילָנֵי טָעְוָתָא דְחַמֵּידתוּן
'For ye shall be ashamed of the trees of the idols which ye have desired'

In this case, too, the ancient translators apparently took the word as the plural of 'god', interpreting it as a reference to 'idols' in accordance with the context. It is no coincidence, then, that while

the MT exhibits *plene* spelling (אֵילִים),[18] 1QIsa[a] uncharacteristically features here defective spelling (אלים).[19] It stands to reason that 1QIsa[a]'s form is no mere matter of alternative orthography; rather, the defective spelling is meant to convey a particular lexical identification of the word in question, interpreting it in line with the other versions.

Intriguingly, the orthographic disagreement between the MT and 1QIsa[a] is matched by a translational debate within the Greek tradition. While the Septuagint translates "over their idols" (ἐπὶ τοῖς εἰδώλοις αὐτῶν), two later revisions offer alternative renditions. Symmachus translates מאלים as ἀπὸ τῶν δρυμῶν 'from the forests'. This translation is matched by the double rendition offered by Targum Jonathan: מֵאִילָנֵי טָעֲוָתָא 'from the trees of idols'. These two are the earliest witnesses to the interpretation of the

[18] In the Aleppo Codex, however, this word is not safeguarded by a Masoretic note. Kennicott (1780, 3) and Ginsburg (1911b, 7) record some orthographic fluctuation.

[19] Admittedly, Kutscher (1974, 152–53) highlights inconsistency in the use of *yod* as a *mater lectionis* in 1QIsa[a], but his discussion includes spellings of different vowels (both *i* and *e*) of all sorts of historical origins (including historical diphthongs). As a matter of fact, 1QIsa[a] testifies to only one word in which **ay* > *ē* is spelled defectively, namely, the plural forms of 'egg': בצים (9.29) || MT בֵּיצִים (10.14), מבציהמה ...בצי (48.15–16, and so also 1QIsa[b] 25.21–22) || MT מִבֵּיצֵיהֶם ...בֵּיצֵי (Isa. 59.5). Cf. MT הַבֵּיצִים (Deut. 22.6) versus בְּצִים (4QpaleoDuet[r] [4Q45] 27–29.6; *DJD* 9, 143 and pl. XXXV); 11QT[a] 65.3. The widespread defective spelling might suggest a variant vocalisation of the word (e.g., *bāṣīm* rather than *bēṣīm* from SG *bēṣɔ* < **bayṣā*; see Bauer and Leander 1922, 202, §17l).

term אֵ(י)לִים as ‘trees’ and the only ones among the ancient versions. More important for our concerns is Aquila, who translates ἀπὸ [τῶν] ἰσχυρῶν ‘from the mighty ones’.

This term can be compared to the Greek version of 2 Kgs (4 Kgdms) 24.15, in which it renders the phrase אֵילֵי הָאָרֶץ ‘the chiefs (or noblemen) of the land’:

(3) 2 Kgs (4 Kgdms) 24.15

MT וְאֵת אולי (אֵילֵי) הָאָרֶץ הוֹלִיךְ גּוֹלָה מִירוּשָׁלַם בָּבֶלָה
‘and the elite of the land, he took into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon’

LXX αἰ τοὺς ἰσχυροὺς τῆς γῆς ἀπήγαγεν ἀποικεσίαν ἐξ Ιερουσαλημ εἰς Βαβυλῶνα
‘And the strong men of the land he led away as a colony from Ierousalem to Babylon’

Vulg *et iudices terrae duxit in captivitatem de Hierusalem in Babylonem*
‘and the judges of the land he carried into captivity, from Jerusalem, into Babylon’

Pesh ܘܠܪܒܪܒ̈ܝ ܕܐܪܥܐ ܫܩܠ ܓܠܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܐܘܪܫܠܡ ܠܒܒܠ.
‘and the noblemen of the land: he took them into exile, from Jerusalem, to Babylon’

TJ וְיָת רַבְרְבֵי אַרְעָא אוֹבֵיל בְּגָלוּתָא מִירוּשְׁלֵם לְבָבֶל
‘and the chiefs of the land he took away in exile from Jerusalem to Babylon’

Historically, the social term אֵילֵי הָאָרֶץ appears to be semantically derived from אַיִל in the sense of ‘ram’, just as the social term אַלּוּף originally denoted ‘bull’, but subsequently shifted to the sense of ‘chief’ (e.g., Gen. 36.15–19; Zech. 12.5–6)—semantic changes that betray the socio-economic background of the ancient, seminomadic Israelite society, in which social status and symbolic capital depended on one’s possession of herds of sheep

and cattle. At any rate, the term אֵילֵי הָאָרֶץ is correctly understood by all the versions as denoting the high officials of the Judahite kingdom.

The phrase recurs in another passage, Ezek. 17.13, and is similarly translated:

(4) Ezek. 17.13

MT וְאֶת אֵילֵי הָאָרֶץ לָקָח
'He had taken away the chief men of the land'

LXX καὶ τοὺς ἡγουμένους τῆς γῆς λήμψεται
'And he shall take the chief men of the land'

Vulg *sed et fortes terrae tollet*
'Yea, and he shall take away the mighty men of the land'

Pesh ܘܠܪܫ̈ܝ ܕܐܪ̈ܥܐ (ܕܡ̈ܠܟ̈ܐ) ܢܣܒ
'He carried off the rulers of the land'

TJ וְיָת רַבְרְבֵי אַרְעָא דְבַר
The nobles of the land he carried off (Levey)

The only difference between this and the previous passage is that the Greek and Latin versions switched their lexical preferences: this time, the Septuagint employs a political term (ἡγούμενος), whereas the Vulgate selects an adjective meaning 'mighty one' (*fortis*).

Noteworthy for our concerns is the fact that in both occurrences of אֵילֵי הָאָרֶץ, the governing noun is spelled *plene* (in 2 Kgs 24.15 there is an inter-Masoretic interchange between *waw* and *yod*).[20] This fact suggests that Aquila's *Vorlage* in Isa. 1.29 was similar to the MT, and not to 1QIsa[a].

[20] No defective spellings are recorded by Ginsburg for 2 Kgs 24.15 (1911a, 427) and Ezek. 17.13 (1911b, 250). Kennicott, however, records the defective spelling אלי for Ezek. 17.13 (1780, 194).

Equipped with this evidence, we are now in a position to return to our passage, Isa. 61.3:

(5) Isa. 61.3

MT וְקֹרְא לָהֶם֙ אֵילֵ֣י הַצֶּ֔דֶק מַטַּ֥ע יְהוָ֖ה לְהִתְפָּאֵֽר׃
'They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory'

1QIsa$^{a}$ וקראו להמה אילי הצדק מטע יהוה להתפאר

4QIsa$^{m}$ [מטע יהוה להתפאר] אׄ֯לי הצדק [וק]רׄא להם

LXX καὶ κληθήσονται γενεαὶ δικαιοσύνης, φύτευμα κυρίου εἰς δόξαν.
'They will be called generations of righteousness, a plant of the Lord for glory'

Vulg *et vocabuntur in ea fortes iustitiae plantatio Domini ad glorificandum*
'and they shall be called in it the mighty ones of justice, the planting of the Lord to glorify him'

Pesh ܘܢܬܩܪܘܢ ܒܗ ܬܘܬܒ̈ܐ ܕܙܕܝܩ̈ܐ ܢ̈ܨܒ̈ܐ ܕܡܪܝܐ ܕܢܬܫܒܚ ܒܗ
'They will be called "The rams of righteousness," the Lord's praiseworthy plant'

TJ וְיִקְרוֹן לְהוֹן רַבְרְבֵי קְשׁטָא עַמֵּיה דַיְוִי לְאִשְׁתַּבָּחָא
'and they shall call them princes of righteousness, the people of the Lord, that he may be glorified'

As we have seen, the two other occurrences of the word that medieval and modern lexica and commentaries take as 'trees' were almost uniformly interpreted by the versions as false 'gods', in accordance with their context. In this case, however, the versions present anything but uniformity, probably because the phrase אֵילֵ֣י הַצֶּ֔דֶק is patently applied to humans, namely, the prophet's addressees.

First, the fact that 1QIsa[a] exhibits the *plene* spelling, just as the MT does,[21] is likely related to the Vulgate and Targum Jonathan's preference for taking the phrase אֵילֵי הַצֶּדֶק in (5) in much the same way they understand אֵילֵי הָאָרֶץ in (3)–(4), i.e., as referring to the political elite.[22] Next, the Peshiṭta translates ܪܚ̈ܠ ܕܙܘܥ̈ܪ̈ܐ, also presupposing the *plene* spelling, but interpreting it literally, as 'rams', rather than figuratively, as 'chiefs'. Finally, the Septuagint anomalously translates "generations of righteousness" (γενεαὶ δικαιοσύνης).[23]

The two Greek components of this phrase recur in Isaiah in only one other place, Isa. 51.8, in which God speaks in the first person: ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη μου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἔσται, τὸ δὲ σωτήριόν μου εἰς γενεὰς γενεῶν 'but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation for generations of generations', which is an apt translation

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[21] The word is not safeguarded by a Masoretic note in the Aleppo Codex. According to Ginsburg (1911b, 85), most manuscripts and editions of the MT employ the *plene* spelling; the defective spelling is recorded in only very few late sources (cf. Kennicott 1780, 79).

[22] Interestingly, in his commentary on Isaiah, Jerome supplies a transcription of the Hebrew word, *ele*, commenting that "each syllable is lengthened" (Scheck 2015, 787; for the Latin original, *vel iuxta Hebraicum ele, per extensam utramque syllabam*, see Adriaen 1963, 708). This comment explicitly refers only to the pronunciation of the word as [ʔeːleː], but does it also imply that both vowels were spelled *plene* (i.e., אילי) in Jerome's *Vorlage*, as in the MT and 1QIsa[a]?

[23] Ottley (1904–1906, 2:369) comments that γενεαὶ is "To explain 'oaks,' here as 'an emblem of the life of the righteous' (Skinner)," but this is very forced. Penner (2020, 629) does not comment on the perplexing Greek phrase.

of an MT-like Hebrew text: וְצִדְקָתִי לְעוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה וִישׁוּעָתִי לְדֹר דֹּרִים ‘but my deliverance (lit. my righteousness) will be forever, and my salvation to all generations’. This verbal similarity suggests that the translator’s point is theological, implying that the prophet’s words in Isa. 61.3 (“They will be called generations of righteousness, a plant of the Lord for glory”) echo God’s soteriological promise in Isa. 51.8. The divine righteousness, in other words, will be revealed as being realised in the destiny of his people; the title by which the people will be known among the nations reflects God’s essence as a righteous saviour.[24]

One cannot help wondering whether this complicated doctrinal construction is meant to cope with a theologically perplexing assertion that the translator may have found in his *Vorlage*. Is it possible that it indirectly reflects a phrase such as אֵלֵי הַצֶּדֶק, as recorded in the original reading of 4Q66? Such a phrase would literally mean ‘gods of righteousness’, which is theologically challenging not only because of the plural form, but also due to its application to flesh-and-blood Judaeans. Is it possible that the Greek rendition is an attempt to accommodate what the translator perceived as a baffling application of a divine epithet to the people of Yehud? If so, the Septuagint suggests how the presence

[24] For alternative explanations, see Baer (2001, 195–96, followed by Spans 2012, 55); Kagan (2018, 21–23, this section was omitted from the published version of his MA thesis). In the latter’s view, the Greek rendition reflects a correct interpretation of the Hebrew phrase in the sense of ‘rightful heirs’, equating אֵילֵי הַצֶּדֶק with צֶמַח צָדָקָה (Jer. 23.5), and taking the *nomen regens* as a reference to offspring (lit. ‘plant, tree’), while the *nomen rectum* refers to their right of inheritance.

or absence of even a single *yod* can play a pivotal role in the exegetical reception of the passage. Since the Greek translator's *Vorlage* is not directly accessible, this proposal is regrettably bound to remain hypothetical.

## 4.0. Conclusion

Regardless of the interpretation of the Greek version, which remains something of a mystery, there is sufficient evidence for the claim that by adding *yod*, the corrector of 4Q66 (possibly identical with the original scribe) was attempting to prevent his readers from construing the word אֵ(י)לֵי as 'gods' or 'divine beings', pushing them to whatever other sense this term could have in its present context.[25] Underlying this correction, then, is the idea that the entire theological meaning of a scriptural passage might hinge on the scribal care for a single *yod*. It is thus our scholarly duty not to neglect even this seemingly slight textual variant, as it has the potential to reveal the underlying linguistic motivations and ideological concerns of ancient scribal traditions.

Such a notion should come as no surprise to scholars of Second Temple Judaism and nascent Christianity, since another manifestation of it, albeit in a different context and with greater emphasis on the Law rather than to the Prophets, is found in Jesus's famous words in the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not think

[25] Unfortunately, the *plene* spelling remains intrinsically ambiguous, so that one cannot be certain which particular homonym was preferred by the scribe: 'rams', 'chiefs', or 'trees', as all these meanings could be assigned to the spelling אילי, and are, indeed, recorded in the versions surveyed above.

that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I say to you: till heaven and earth pass away, not even *one iota or one stroke of a letter* (ἰῶτα ἓν, ἢ μία κεραία) will pass from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matt. 5.17–20).[26]

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[26] For the Hebrew terms יוד and קוץ underlying the Greek phrase, see Kister (2021).

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# THE VOCABULARY OF THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH: A GENERAL OVERVIEW

*Moshe Florentin*

The uniqueness of the Samaritans and the difference between them and their Jewish neighbours is evident in every field: history, beliefs and customs, material culture, literature and language. My friend, Prof. Geoffrey Kahn, has mastered a great number of Semitic languages, eastern and western, northern and southern. In our conversations, he has also shown great interest in the languages that have been used by the Samaritans: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic. In this article dedicated to him, I seek to present a general picture of Samaritan vocabulary as it is reflected in the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch (SP).[1]

The subject requires a preliminary discussion of the uniqueness of SP, which was recognised already in ancient times. The modern investigation of SP began in 1815, with the seminal study of Wilhelm Gesenius. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has taught us that SP was based on one of the versions used in Eretz

* I am grateful to my friend and colleague, Prof. Steve Fassberg, from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He read the first draft of this paper and significantly contributed to its content and language style.

[1] Tov (2012) is a reliable source from which the English reader can draw general information as well as some specifics about the character of SP.

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Israel around the beginning of the Christian Era. This version was edited by members of the Samaritan community and adapted to their beliefs and language. Their efforts culminated in two layers of SP, both of which serve as a basis for examining SP vocabulary.

The first layer is reflected in the written text of SP. It is known from hundreds of Samaritan manuscripts, whose earliest copies date to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE.[2] Contrary to the Masoretic Text (MT), SP never crystalised into a *textus receptus*, a text uniform in all its details. Even if the Samaritans attribute a status of sanctity to the manuscript they designate the 'Book of Abisha' (Castro 1959), its spelling (on the vowel system, see below) is considered no more 'correct' than that of other manuscripts.

Indeed, Samaritan manuscripts differ greatly in their spelling. If we compare SP to MT, we may say that the different spellings of Samaritan words constitute 'allo-variants'. Note, for example, וְלֹו יִקְהַת עַמִּים 'And to Him shall be the obedience of peoples' (Gen. 49.10) in MT as opposed to SP ולו יקהתו (/יקחתו) עמים 'and to him peoples shall gather':[3] [יקהתו] and [יקחתו] are 'allo-variants' of /יקהתו/, which is different from the MT variant /יקהת/. In the same way, one may say that each of the Samaritan manuscripts is an 'allo-version' of the Samaritan version.

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[2] A short review of the major manuscripts of SP can be found in the preface to the edition by Schorch (2013, xxi–xxii).

[3] Our translation (Florentin-Tal 2025) is based on the Samaritan interpretation reflected in the Samaritan Targum (ST) יתכנשון and the Arabic translation יגתמע.

The second layer is the vocalisation. Here the difference between the transmission of SP and the transmission of MT is more acute. Unlike their Jewish neighbours, the Samaritans did not develop an elaborate and complete system of vowel signs. In Samaritan manuscripts one finds sporadic signs for marking vowels, but the use of these marks is limited in scope and not uniform (Ben-Ḥayyim 2000, §0.6). In other words, a language study based solely on these signs does not present a complete picture of SP and Samaritan Hebrew (SH). On the other hand, the Samaritans have a precise and faithful reading tradition of their Torah. It is customary to assume that the foundations of this tradition, though not in all its details as they are heard today, go back to the end of the Second Temple Period.

Thus, whoever wants to know SP, and in our case its vocabulary, must have recourse to one of the editions of SP[4] together with the fourth volume of *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic amongst the Samaritans* (Ben-Ḥayyim 1977), in which Z. Ben-Ḥayyim presented readers with a complete transcription of the Samaritan pronunciation of the Torah and a concordance.

[4] Critical editions include those of von Gall (1918) and Schorch (2018). Tal and Florentin (2010) is a parallel edition of SP versus MT. The Samaritan manuscript on which the latter edition is based can also be found with the English translation in Florentin and Tal's new edition (2025).

## 1.0. Non-lexical Differences

The nature of the vocabulary of SP should be examined in the light of the general uniqueness of SP. There are three types of differences between SP and MT: (a) textual; (b) grammatical; (c) orthographic, i.e., involving the use of *matres lectionis*. Since spelling differences, such as הַצִּפֹּר 'the bird' (MT) versus הצפור (SP, Lev. 14.7) are not relevant to an examination of the lexicon, we will look for potential differences in vocabulary as they are related to text and grammar.

The order of the text at all levels is one of the most prominent features of SP, at the level of both verse and discourse. Thus, for example, in MT it is written: וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל־הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה 'Cain said to Abel his brother, and when they were in the field' (Gen. 4.8), while SP presents a smoother text: ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו נלכה השדה ויהי בהיותם בשדה "Cain said to Abel his brother, "Let us go to the field," and when they were in the field". Although the words נלכה and השדה do not occur in the MT verse, it is worth noting that these two words are found elsewhere in both versions. Thus, this essential difference does not reflect any lexical innovation. In Gen. 29.3 MT relates וְנֶאֶסְפוּ־שָׁמָּה כָל־הָעֲדָרִים וְגָלְלוּ אֶת־הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר 'And all the flocks would be gathered there, and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth'. SP knows that the subject of the verb וגללו 'and they would roll' is not the herds, but their shepherds. It removes ambiguity by replacing MT הָעֲדָרִים 'the herds' with הרעים 'the shepherds', resulting in 'and all the shepherds would gather there'. Yet רעים (SG רועה) is not a neologism in SP, as it appears in several other places in the Torah.

SP often reflects a different approach to the events narrated in the text. For example, in the MT version of Jacob's blessing for his sons Simeon and Levi are severely condemned, 'Cursed (אָרוּר) be their anger' (Gen. 49.7). Conversely, in SP Jacob praises the two brothers, using the word אדיר 'exalted'. In this case, too, however, there is no lexical innovation, for both אדיר and ארור occur elsewhere in the two versions.

Particularly notable, though not numerous in number, are cases that reflect religious differences between Jews and Samaritans regarding the place God chose לשכן שמו שם 'to put His name there' (Deut 12.11; 14.23; 16.6; 26.2). The Jews believe it is Jerusalem, which had not yet been chosen when the children of Israel entered the land of Canaan, whereas for the Samaritans it is Mount Gerizim. Thus, in MT it is written 'in the place which he will choose (יִבְחַר)', while in SP בחר 'he has chosen' occurs (Deut. 12.5, etc.). Yet, again, there is no difference in vocabulary here, since imperfect יבחר is attested in SP elsewhere (e.g., Num. 16.5) and MT attests perfect בָּחַר (e.g., Deut. 7.6).

In Deut. 27.4, according to MT, the children of Israel are commanded to build a stone altar 'on Mount Ebal' (בְּהַר עֵיבָל); SP reads 'on Mount Gerizim' (בהרגריזים). Here, too, no lexical difference separates the two versions, since Mount Ebal appears in SP elsewhere, as does Mount Gerizim (written as separate words, הַר גְּרִזִים) in MT.

Nor do harmonising additions in SP create lexical differences between SP and MT, since they are pericopes that have

been added from other parts of the Pentateuch common to both SP and MT.[5]

This rather general overview teaches us that the multiple differences between the versions of the two traditions do not necessarily lead to differences in vocabulary.

In what respect, then, is Samaritan vocabulary different from MT vocabulary? It lies in the realms of *phonology* and *morphology*, and, to a great extent, in the *interpretation* given to the words over the generations by the Samaritan community. Scarcely does one find completely *different* words (verbs, common and proper nouns) in SP. Below we will begin with minor differences in vocabulary and move on to major ones.

## 2.0. Phonetic Differences Expected according to Samaritan Hebrew Phonology

This type of difference is exemplified by the Tiberian word אֱלֹהִים 'God', pronounced by the Samaritans *ēluwwəm*. Four sound shifts are attested in this word: (a) the vowel *u* is assimilated to *o* before *ww*; (b) the consonant *w* is the geminated reflex of an intervocalic glottal stop; (c) the vowel *ə*, unrelated to the Tiberian *shewa*, is the expected reflex of the vowels *i* and *e* in a closed post-tonic syllable; (d) as is true in the vast majority of words in SH, stress

[5] An exception is the independent addition in כי עשה זאת כזבח שכח ועברה היא לאלהי יעקב 'for whoever does so is like one who sacrifices while abandoning (God's commandments), and it is a transgression against the God of Yāqob' (SP Num. 27.19a). Yet, even this highly important addition includes no lexical innovation.

falls on the penultimate, rather than ultimate (see, respectively, Ben-Ḥayyim 2000, §§1.1.8; 1.2.5; 1.4.6; 1.5.3.1).

Such is the case with many words in SP: they differ from their Tiberian counterparts only in terms of pronunciation according to predictable sound shifts.

## 3.0. Phonetic Differences Resulting from Sporadic Changes

The Canaanite shift, secondary gemination, and the various realisations of the *shewa* are linguistic phenomena whose character and distribution in SH differ from those in Tiberian Hebrew (TH). Usually we are unable, however, to predict their appearance. Let us briefly demonstrate these phenomena.

The Tiberian personal pronoun אָנֹכִי is pronounced by the Samaritans *ånåki*.[6] This is one of the cases in which—contrary to TH—the Canaanite shift does not occur in SH. As elsewhere, so too here, we do not know the reason for the lack of the shift. It would not have been surprising if the form of this pronoun had been **ånūki*, whose vowel *ū* reflects the vowel *o*, as in TH.

The noun אָדוֹן ‘lord, master’ has three forms in SH—one in the locution אדון האדונים *åːdon åːdūnəm* ‘Lord of lords’, which demonstrates the Canaanite shift like the Tiberian form. The second is the equivalent of the Tiberian divine epithet אֲדֹנָי ‘Lord’, realised in SH as *åːdåːni*, i.e., without the Canaanite shift. The third parallels Tiberian title employed with human referents אֲדֹנִי ‘my

[6] The plosive pronunciation of the /k/ is expected (Ben-Ḥayyim 2000, §1.1.5).

lord', SH *ǻdanni*. The gemination of *n* in the latter form is secondary and thus unexpected. It should be noted that, though this phenomenon is of a purely phonetic nature, in this case it reflects one of the most significant characteristics of the vocabulary of SH, i.e., semantic differentiation. This matter is discussed in greater detail in §5.0 below.

## 4.0. Non-semantic Morphological Differences

Morphological differences between SH and TH are numerous and occur in all grammatical categories of the language. Many verbs that in TH belong to the *qal* stem are attested in SH in the geminated *piʿʿel* stem with no difference in meaning (Ben-Ḥayyim 2000, §2.15.5). Thus, the root של"ח appears in SH only in the *piʿʿel*, e.g., MT שְׁלַחְתִּי (Gen. 38.23) but SP *šallātti*. The Tiberian personal pronoun אַתְּ 'you' (FSG) is realised in the SP as *atti*, while Tiberian אַתֶּם 'you' (MPL) is paralleled by Samaritan *attimma*. Differences of this kind, consistent or sporadic, are numerous.

In SH, secondary roots were also formed whose meanings do not usually differ from the meanings of the original roots in TH (cf., however, יפת, below, §8.0). Thus, for example, in contrast to the MT internal passive form of *qal* יֻתַּן 'will be given' from the root נת"ן, the Samaritans read *yētən*, a perfect form of the passive of *qal* from the secondary root ית"ן.[7] The Samaritan verb parallel to Tiberian *nifʿal* of נִמּוֹל מו"ל is passive *qal* of נמ"ל *nēməl*.[8] In

[7] According to Ben-Ḥayyim (2000, §2.15.5), the form *yētən* preserves the ancient root ית"ן.

[8] In late Samaritan sources, a feminine proper noun נמילה *nēmīla* literally 'circumcised', i.e., 'pure', is widely attested (see Florentin 2005, 294).

conclusion, all these phonetic and morphological differences relate only to form. They are not differences in meaning.

## 5.0. Morphological Differences for Semantic Differentiation[9]

Here, too, we deal with neither words unattested in TH nor new meanings of existing words, but rather different morphologies, which are exploited for purposes of semantic differentiation. In other words, a word that in TH has two functions or meanings is divided in SH into two forms, each with a distinct meaning.

Some of these distinctions are grammatical. In the verbal system, they are used to establish an aspectual difference between a non-habitual action and one that is habitual, e.g., in *qal* the *qotel* pattern is used to express habitual action, whereas *qatil* expresses non-habitual action: הנחל היורד מן ההר 'the brook that descended from the mountain' (*ayyūrəd*, Deut. 26.21) versus מלאכי אלהים עלים וירדים 'the angels of God were ascending and descending' (*wyå̊rēdəm*, Gen. 28.12).

More interesting semantically are similar meanings but differences in use, e.g., as opposed to TH בְּכוֹר 'firstborn', SH distinguishes between a generic firstborn, realised as *bå̊kor*, and the firstborn for a sacrifice, *bikkor* (Deut. 15.19). The basic meaning of the MT בָּכָה 'weep' is expressed by the *qal*, e.g., *yēbēku* (Num. 13.11), but when 'mourn' is intended, the *piʿel* is used, e.g., *yēbakku* (Lev. 10.6). MT מוֹעֵד 'meeting' is pronounced in SP as

[9] For a detailed discussion see Florentin (1996, 217–41).

*muwwəd* (Exod. 27.21), but when indicating ‘time’ it is realised as *muwwad* (Exod. 9.5).

A special case is the verb תֹּאכַל, for which SH has a special form when denoting ‘peeling off the skin’, a meaning unattested in TH exegesis. The derivations of א"כל in the sense of ‘eat’ are expressed by *qal* verbs, e.g., אָכַל *åkəl*, תֹּאכַל *tå’ūkəl*. However, when the Samaritans interpret it as ‘peeling off the skin’, they pronounce it *tåkkəl*, e.g., נפש אשר תאכל נבלה ‘And every soul who skins that which dies’ (Lev. 17.15). As for the meaning, it should be noted that some manuscripts of the Samaritan Targum (ST) render תאכל with the verb אכל and others with the verb גרף, i.e., they are not unequivocal as to the meaning of the word תאכל in the verse. Thus, it is possible that the distinction is not in meaning, but rather in use, i.e., ‘eating’ is simply expressed by the *qal* whereas ‘eating a carcass’ by the *pi״el*.

SP also distinguishes between proper and common nouns, which in MT share the same form. The proper noun *Jamin* יָמִין is pronounced *yåmən* (Gen. 46.8), while the common noun יָמִין ‘right’ is realised as *yammən*. More complex is the semantics of the word לָבָן, which is pronounced *låbən* (Gen. 30.35) when signifying ‘white’, is *låbån* (Gen. 24.29) when referring to Laban (לָבָן) Rebecca’s father, and is pronounced *libbån* (Deut. 1.1) when designating the toponym Laban (לָבָן).

## 6.0. Samaritan Contemporisation of Rare and Archaic Words

If the generally accepted assessment of SH is correct, then it is, on the whole, a linguistically modernised version of a more ancient language type. The modernisation is reflected mainly in the simplification of the language and the bringing of its forms closer to the language used in the Second Temple Period. Thus, we see in SP the almost complete absence of grammatical and archaic forms that do not correspond to the language of the period, e.g., instead of וְחַיְתוֹ־אֶרֶץ 'the beast of the earth' (Gen. 1.24), SP reads וחית הארץ *wayyåt ʾårəṣ*, instead of תַּחְתֶּנָּה 'in its place' (Gen. 2.21) SP has תחתיה *tåttiyya*, and instead of לְדֵעָה 'to know' (Exod. 2.4) SP has updated to לדעת *alʿdāt*.

As part of this trend, obscure lexical forms, which probably seemed corrupt to the editors of the text, were also reworked. Thus, instead of סותה 'his vesture' (Gen. 49.11 *ketiv*), SP has כסותו *kassūtu* in the same sense; instead of the rare and obscure תָּרִיד 'you grow restless' (Gen. 27.40), SP shows תהדר *tåddår* 'you shall become powerful'; instead of וּמַתָּן 'and a gift' (Gen. 34.12) SP reads ומתנה *wmåttåna* with the same meaning; instead of וַתְּעַר 'she emptied' (Gen. 24.20) SP has ותוריד *wtūrəd* 'she let it down'; instead of הִצּוּ 'contended' (Num. 26.9) there is הועדו *uwwāʾēdu* 'gathered'; and instead of דָּבְאֶךָ 'your strength' (Deut. 33.25), רביך *råbbək* 'your greatness'. While TH has three words signifying 'dread'—חֲתַת, חַת, חֵת—only חתת is attested in SP, e.g., TH וְחִתְּכֶם 'your dread' (Gen. 9.2) versus SP וחתתכם *wåtåtkimma*; in MT, the noun חֲתַת is found only outside the Torah (Job 6.21).

Even so, none of these changes gave rise to new words in SP. At most, we have in this version new morphological forms of existing words, but very rarely new derivations, such as MT's contextually difficult substantive פַּחַז 'unstable' (Gen. 49.4), which was replaced with the verb פחזת *fā'izta* 'you have been unstable'.

## 7.0. Proper Nouns

This group of nouns reflects, to a significant extent, the character of the lexical differences between the two traditions. SP morphology differs greatly from its MT counterpart. Sometimes the differences are between vowels, as in עוֹבָל 'Obal' (Gen. 10.28) versus עיבל *ībål* in SP. Sometimes the proper nouns differ consonantally due to (1) sound shift, e.g., בִּנְיָמִין 'Benjamin' versus בנימים *binyåməm*, or (2) graphic confusion, e.g., דֹּדָנִים 'Dodanim' versus רודנים *rūdånəm* (Gen. 10.4), צְדָדָה 'toward Zedad' versus צרדה *ṣåridda* (Num. 34.8), וְשֶׁמְאֵבֶר 'and Shemeber' versus ושמאבד *wšam'abbåd* (Gen. 14.2).

In some cases, the proper nouns differ in MT and SP in a particular verse, e.g., the oft-cited difference בְּהַר עֵיבָל 'on Mount Ebal' in MT versus בהרגריזים *bårgårīzəm* 'on Mount Gerizim (written as a single word)' (Deut. 27.4), or בָּשְׂמַת 'Basemath (Esau's wife)' versus מחלת *må'ēlåt* (Gen. 36.3; cf. MT מָחֲלַת 'Mahalath [daughter of Ishmael]' Gen. 28.9). However, all these proper nouns also appear elsewhere in SP and MT. The difference in these cases is, therefore, only in the distribution of the words.

Sometimes a proper noun is interpreted as a common noun, such as וְכַלְנֵה 'and Calneh' (Gen. 10.10), which the Samaritans

read *wkallinna* ‘and all of them’, i.e., the noun כל + 3FPL pronominal suffix. In this case, too, SP exhibits no lexical innovation.

## 8.0. Morphological Differences with Specialised Lexical Meanings

There are not many such words and they are similar in form to their MT parallels. Representative examples are

(a) The verb יַפְתְּ (short imperfect of פת"י) in the verse יַפְתְּ אֱלֹהִים לְיֶפֶת ‘May God enlarge Japheth’ (Gen. 9.27) is pronounced by the Samaritans *yefət* (see above, §4.0). A secondary root יפ"ת was created, whose meaning ‘beautiful’ is reflected in the translations into Aramaic יפה (in MS A of the ST) and Arabic (يحسن). But it must be stressed that, while the form of the Samaritan verb is unambiguous, its interpretation by the Samaritans is not uniform, since another manuscript of ST has יפתי, as in MT.

(b) Instead of MT וַיָּרֶק אֶת־חֲנִיכָיו ‘he led forth/mustered(?)/armed(?) his trained men’ (Gen. 14.14), the Samaritans read וידק *wyiddåq*, a verb derived from דק"ק, a variant of דו"ק ‘see’, probably related to Akkadian *deku* ‘mobilise troops’. If one follows ST זיאן (which is also attested in Targum Neofiti to MT [!]), one may interpret וידק as ‘equipped’.

(c) The interrogative הֲלוֹא is pronounced by the Samaritans *å*ˈ*lū* (usually written הלוא). Unlike MT, it does not include the negating particle לא, pronounced by the Samaritans *lā* (and always written without *mater waw*). In SH, it is rather an interjection probably related to the presentative

particle אֲלוּ in Biblical Aramaic, which was realised variously elsewhere in Aramaic: הלו, ארי, ארום, and in Mishnaic Hebrew (MH) as הרי. For this reason, while almost all English translations of MT render הֲלוֹא 'is it not?', in our translation of SP (Florentin and Tal 2025), we prefer to render *ʾāʾlū* הלוא as the interjection 'behold'.

(d) A clear case of a lexical difference involves the enigmatic TH word מְכֵרֹתֵיהֶם (Gen. 49.5) versus SP מכרתיהם *makrētīyyimma*. In MT, the word has been given some thirty interpretations (Florentin 2001, 189–202). Regardless of its obscure etymology in MT, it differs from the Samaritan *makrət*, which is derived from כר"ת (for its meaning see below, §9.0).

## 9.0. Samaritan Exegesis

The meaning of מכרתיהם *makrētīyyimma* in SP—'their swords' or 'their alliance'—brings us to the focal point of difference between the Samaritan lexicon and that of MT, i.e., interpretation and exegesis. Indeed, in most cases SP does not reflect a different vocabulary, but different ways of interpreting the text. Since the Samaritan exegesis of SP, like that of MT, is not uniform, one often finds that a particular Samaritan interpretation differs from the accepted interpretation of the MT, but that a second way of interpretation corresponds to the accepted interpretation in MT. In many cases the Samaritan interpretation contradicts the version that emerges from the reading tradition.

(a) The noun צרה 'distress' is spelled in Samaritan manuscripts both צרה and צרעה (!). In the verse על כן באה אלינו

כל הצרה הזאת ‘Therefore all this trouble comes to us’ (Gen. 42.21), it is pronounced by the Samaritans *åṣṣˈrå̊*. In fact, this reading fits the pronunciation of the noun צרעה ‘hornet’ (the noun צרה ‘trouble’ is pronounced *ṣårrå*). Thus, in contrast to MT הצרה, SP *åṣṣˈrå̊* ‘hornet’—with its two written ‘allo-variants’ הצרה and הצרעה—is the version before us. However, the Samaritan translations into Aramaic (עקתה, ציקתה) and Arabic (الضيقه) show that translators interpreted this word as ‘distress’, rather than ‘hornet’. Is *åṣṣˈrå̊* a late tradition, which substituted the alleged original *åṣårrå*? Whatever the case may be, here, too, the issue is not a difference in lexical inventory, but rather in lexical distribution in the text.

(b) The noun שְׁפִיפֹן ‘viper’ (Gen. 49.17) is pronounced by the Samaritans *šå̊få̊fon* (and spelled accordingly שפפון). This is ostensibly just a morphological difference, and indeed there is no hint in SP that the text presents a different word with a different meaning. However, ST renders it as מכמן ‘hidden’, i.e., שפפון was perceived as an adjective derived from the root שפ"ף ‘bent’, which is not attested in BH.

Should a Samaritan dictionary include the different interpretations offered by the Samaritan sources for each and every word? The biblical lexicons of MT do not present all the interpretations of a given word and neither should a SH dictionary of the Pentateuch.

Indeed, the field of Samaritan studies awaits a comprehensive study of the Samaritan interpretation of the Torah in all its

details no less than a Samaritan dictionary or a detailed monograph that presents the uniqueness of the Samaritan lexicon of the Torah.

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# SOME CASES OF GRAMMATICALISATION IN MISHNAIC HEBREW AND THEIR DIACHRONIC IMPLICATIONS

*Edward Cook*

The transition from Old to Middle Hebrew was a watershed, catalysed by new historical and societal factors that gave greater impetus to an Aramaic substratum and irrevocably and permanently changed the Hebrew language (Cook 2017; 2021). The differences between Old (Biblical and Qumranic) Hebrew and Middle (Mishnaic) Hebrew are so stark that they make the variations between stages and dialects of Old Hebrew seem minor in comparison. Nevertheless, an appreciation of the effect of Aramaic interference should not lead us to discount the amount of continuity between the Old and Middle stages of Hebrew. An examination of some instances of grammaticalisation in Mishnaic Hebrew (MH) casts light on the nature of this continuity.

This essay is offered with admiration and affection to Geoffrey Khan, with warm memories of his visit to Washington to deliver the inaugural Henri Hyvernat Lecture at the Catholic University of America in 2012 and of his kind hospitality during our visit to Cambridge in 2016.

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## 1.0. The Conjunction הוֹאִיל וְ- ‘because, since’

The particle הוֹאִיל, invariably followed by the conjunction -וְ, is self-evidently a grammaticalisation of the Biblical Hebrew (BH) verb הוֹאִיל (*hifʿil* of a putative root י"א that occurs in no other stem). In the Bible, הוֹאִיל appears 18 times, sometimes with an infinitive complement (Gen. 18.27, 31; Exod. 2.21; Josh. 17.12; Judg. 1.27, 35; 17.11; 1 Sam. 12.22; 1 Chron. 17.27), but also as a co-verb, as the first verb in a paired sequence, connected syndetically or asyndetically (Deut. 1.5; Josh. 7.7; Judg. 19.6; 2 Sam. 7.29; 2 Kgs 5.23; 6.3; Hos. 5.11; Job 6.9, 28). In both constructions it functions as an auxiliary to the verbal form that follows it and never appears on its own.

Contextually, some such gloss as ‘desire, resolve, consent (to do something)’ yields a good sense in all of the occurrences; semantically, it expresses the act of will that generates the action signified by the verbal form that follows, e.g., וַיּוֹאֶל הַלֵּוִי לָשֶׁבֶת אֶת־ הָאִישׁ ‘the Levite resolved/decided to live with the man’ (Judg. 17.11); הוֹאִיל הָלַךְ אַחֲרֵי־צָו ‘he was determined to go after vanity’ (Hos. 5.11); מֹשֶׁה בֵּאֵר אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת לֵאמֹר הוֹאִיל ‘Moses undertook to expound this instruction’ (Deut. 1.5). In the imperative, it means little more than ‘please’: וְעַתָּה הוֹאֵל וּבָרֵךְ אֶת־בֵּית עַבְדְּךָ ‘now, be pleased and bless the house of your servant’ (2 Sam. 7.29); הוֹאֶל־נָא וְלִין ‘please spend the night’ (Judg. 19.6).

הוֹאִיל was used, like its complements, only with personal (human or divine) subjects. With finite complements, it agreed in number, gender, and tense. In these respects, it functioned like a full-fledged verb; but it had lost some of its autonomy in that it

always had to be linked with another verbal form and could not be used by itself.

In the Mishna and other Tannaitic sources,[1] we find the invariant form הוֹאִיל followed by -וְ in the meaning ‘because, since’, used at the head of a clause, e.g., הוֹאִיל וְנִשְׁחַט שֶׁלֹּא עַל פִּי מוּמְחֶה אָסוּר ‘since it was slaughtered not by the command of an expert, it is prohibited’ (m. Bek. 4.3); וְלָמָּה מַזְכִּירִין אֶת דִּבְרֵי יָחִיד בֵּין הַמְּרוּבִּין הוֹאִיל וְאֵין הֲלָכָה אֶלָּא כְּדִבְרֵי הַמְּרוּבִּין ‘why do they mention the opinion of an individual among the majority, since the *halakha* follows the opinion of the majority?’ (m. Eduy. 1.5); מַה אִכְפַּת לְךָ הוֹאִיל וַאֲנִי נוֹתֵן לְךָ חֲבוֹרְךָ ‘what is it to you, since I am giving you your rental?’ (m. Bab. Mes. 9.4); הואיל ואמרה תורה תן תפילין בראש תן תפלין ביד ‘since the Torah said, Put tefillin on the head, put tefillin on the hand (as well)’ (*Mekhilta*, Lauterbach 2004 [1933], I:102).

The clause headed by הוֹאִיל may be either verbal or verbless (i.e., copular); if verbal, the verb must be in the past or the present (participial) tense. The meaning ‘since’ is never temporal, but always introduces a reason or motivation for a particular conclusion or remark.

In the centuries between the biblical and the tannaitic examples, הואיל evidently lost its ability to inflect as a verb, as well as its independent meaning, and was converted wholly into a causal conjunction—in short, it underwent grammaticalisation. This was clearly seen by Wilhelm Bacher over a century ago:

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[1] The Mishnaic citations are taken from the transcription of the Kaufmann MS as contained in the Mishna module of Accordance Bible Software (MISH-T, Accordance 12.3.7).

> Das nur zur Einführung des Hauptverbums dienende und an sich keinen eigentlichen Inhalt darbietende Verbum verlor durch den Gebrauch seine Bedeutung und seine Betonung; es erstarrte gleichsam and wurde zur Partikel: das Verbum wurde zur Conjunction und der begründende Hauptsatz zu einem Nebensatze des Grundes. (Bacher 1905, 38)

That grammaticalisation happened is clear, but the process is less clear. We are forced to infer almost all of the intermediate steps between BH הוֹאִיל and MH -וְהוֹאִיל. The BH occurrences show the incipient loss of autonomy due to auxiliation, and the MH usage shows the complete change of category from verb to clausal subordinator.

Bacher suggested that a sentence, such as הואיל ואמר הכתוב 'the scripture desired to say', was used as an exegetical justification for a ruling. This eventually led to a reinterpretation of הואיל as 'since the scripture said', which in turn led to the release of הואיל from its verbal origins and its consequent transformation into a pure particle—bringing with it into its new role the residual, and now meaningless -וְ, as an invariable accompaniment. He placed the evolution of the form completely within an exegetical context and, by implication, within the rabbinic period (Bacher 1905, 51–52).

This would imply that lexical הוֹאִיל in the meaning 'want, wish, consent' was known in the rabbinic period. However, there is some evidence that later generations had forgotten the meaning of lexical הוֹאִיל before the rabbinic period (the time of the *Tanna'im*). The major ancient translations (LXX, Vulgate, Targum) frequently translate it as 'begin', and the Tannaitic midrash

*Sifre* (2nd century CE) says explicitly (with regard to Deut. 1.5) אין הואלה אלא התחלה 'הוֹאִיל means *to begin*'. The earliest attestation of this is in the Septuagint; in eleven of the eighteen occurrences of הוֹאִיל, the Greek translates it as 'begin'; in the other seven, it either does not translate it or translates *ad sensum* (never using a word meaning 'desire/wish'). The targumic evidence is also important, since the targums (unlike the Vulgate) are less likely to have been influenced by the LXX. (The gloss 'begin' has left some traces in modern lexicography,[2] but is not considered primary.) In short, it was a traditional guess to render הוֹאִיל as 'begin', but there are no clear Hebrew attestations of the word in that meaning, and it seems that lexical הוֹאִיל had fallen out of use by post-biblical times.[3] Its grammaticalisation must have taken place long before the rabbinic period.

Therefore, הוֹאִיל's 'off-stage' evolution into a particle most probably took place within the biblical era, although the particular idioms and implicatures which motivated this change are now irretrievable. (Possibly the change followed a semantic line from *be willing, consent* > *grant, admit* > *granted, admittedly* > *given that, since*.) By the late centuries BCE, the meaning of the

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[2] Gesenius's first edition (1815) lists *anfangen* as one sense, but this survives only as *sich an etw[as] machen, etw[a] in Angriff nehmen* (i.e., to address oneself to a task) in Gesenius-Buhl (1905), citing Deut. 1.5, and the recent volume by Dietrich and Arnet follows suit (2003, 200). BDB and the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* do not include 'to begin' among the senses.

[3] The Peshiṭta does translate with words meaning 'wish, desire' (Exod. 2.21; Josh. 17.12; Judg. 1.35; 19.6; 1 Sam. 12.22; 2 Kgs 6.3; Hos. 5.11; Job 6.9, 28). These are most likely accurate *ad sensum* guesses.

lexical etymon הוֹאִיל had been forgotten, but the conjunctional combination -וְ+הוֹאִיל survived in the vernacular dialect that, transformed by Aramaic interference, eventually became MH.

It is apparent that contact with Aramaic did not cause the grammaticalisation of הוֹאִיל, for Aramaic does not have any conjunctions that are formally or functionally similar to it. Nor have any Aramaic verbs of the same semantic range undergone a similar process of grammaticalisation. This is a process that is explicable completely in terms of internal Hebrew development.

## 2.0. The Conjunction כְּדֵי ‘in order to, in order that’

The conjunction כְּדֵי is transparently a combination of the preposition -כְּ and the lexical word דַּי ‘(sufficient) amount’, in construct דֵּי. In BH, the substantive is used in a number of ways both with and without prepositions. In construct with another noun, it means ‘enough X for’ something, e.g., וְהַעֲבֵט תַּעֲבִיטֶנּוּ דֵּי מַחְסֹרוֹ ‘you shall lend him enough (money) for his need’ (Deut. 15.8); וּלְבָנוֹן אֵין דֵּי בְּעֵר וְחַיָּתוֹ אֵין דֵּי עוֹלָה ‘Lebanon is not enough (wood) for fuel, and its beasts not enough (meat) for a burnt offering’ (Isa. 40.16); וְדֵי חֲלֵב עִזִּים לֶלַחְמֶךָ ׀ ‘(There is) enough goats’ milk for your food’ (Prov. 27.27). The preposition -כְּ can be added to דֵּי without apparent difference in meaning: כְּדֵי גְּאֻלָּתוֹ ‘enough (money) for his redemption’ (Lev. 25.26).

Words like דֵּי meaning ‘enough’ express scalar quantification, so that some item or quality necessary for enabling a partic-

ular situation has reached the critical enabling point on an implicit scale.[4] Besides the enabling item and enabled situation, the syntactic expression of the quantification in BH may include the possessor of the item, or agents otherwise involved in the situation, e.g., דְּבַשׁ מָצָאתָ אֱכֹל דַּיֶּךָּ 'If you have found honey, eat enough (honey) for yourself' (Prov. 25.16). Here the enabler is honey, the enabled situation is, tacitly, the satisfaction of hunger, and the possessor of the honey is encoded in the pronominal suffix.

In MH, כְּדֵי also has the meaning of 'enough': כְּדֵי תְרוּמַת מַעֲשֵׂר וְחַלָּה 'enough [item] for the offering of tithe and bread' (m. Dem. 2.4)—enabled situation as the complement; כְּדֵי חַלָּה מֵעִיסָּה 'enough *ḥallah* from the dough' (m. Ḥal. 4.6), with the item as the complement. This usage matches the biblical usage.

כְּדֵי is also used with an infinitive verbal complement, e.g., לוּלָב שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ שְׁלוֹשָׁה טְפָחִים כְּדֵי לְנַעְנֵעַ בּוֹ כָּשֵׁר 'a *lulav* three handbreadths, enough (length) to shake with it, is valid' (m. Sukk. 3.1). The verbal complement may also take the form of -שֶׁ plus the imperfect: וּבַגָּדוֹל כְּדֵי שֶׁיֹּאחֵז שְׁנַיִם בְּיָדוֹ אַחַת 'In size, enough that one may hold two (*etrogs*) in one hand' (m. Sukk. 3.7).

Since the concept 'enough' already entails a situation that comes about as the result of some enabler, the word כְּדֵי eventually comes to mark that situation as the goal of some other action, without any implied quantification of an enabler. Consider the following instance: מבחוץ כדי שיהו המצרים רואין ומיעיהם מתחתכין [referring to whether the Passover blood should be displayed inside

[4] This analysis is indebted to the description and terminology used by FrameNet (https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/luIndex), s.v. *Sufficiency*.

the house or outside] ‘Outside, כדי ש- the Egyptians will see and their bowels will be upset’ (*Mekhilta*, Lauterbach 2004 [1933], I:59). Here there is no suggestion that the amount of blood is at issue. It is not whether the blood is ‘enough’, but where it is to be located. If it is outside, then the Egyptians will be able to see it and will be afraid. The enabling situation is polar (inside versus outside), not scalar, as in the ‘enough’ scenario, and this shows that the meaning ‘enough’ can recede from כְּדֵי and it can be used as a simple marker of purpose, i.e., it has undergone grammaticalisation.

This is particularly clear with negative purpose clauses, as in the following: פֵּיאָה אֵין קוֹצְרִין אוֹתָהּ בַּמַּגָּלוֹת וְאֵין עוֹקְרִין אוֹתָהּ בַּקַּרְדּוּמוֹת כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא יַכּוּ אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ ‘(As for) *pe’a*: they do not harvest it with sickles or uproot it with spades, so that one may not strike another (with the tool)’ (m. Pe’a 4.4). Since the ‘enough’ schema requires an enabled situation, a ‘disabled’ situation, so to speak, is excluded by definition; if כְּדֵי is used simply to introduce a purpose clause, then the clause can be negated. This is the clearest expression of the extension of כְּדֵי into its new function.

Thus far all is clear, and there is no indication that any move in this semantic evolution is indebted to outside influence, such as from Aramaic. However, there is a similar construction in Aramaic, where the word for ‘enough, sufficiency’ is *missat* or *messat*. Like דֵּי, *missat* is a noun in construct that became frozen and indeclinable.

In Syriac, the word came to serve as a conjunction to introduce purpose clauses: ܡܫܬ ܠܗ ܥܠ ܗܓܪ ܙܥܘܪܐ ‘so that he should have a little comfort from Hagar’ (Aphrem on Gen.

73.9); ܗܕܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܬ ܒܥܘܫܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܟܕ ‘so that the ranks of the priesthood should not be levelled’ (Theodore bar Koni 129.20) (exemplification from Sokoloff 2009, 796), and elsewhere.

Although these examples from literary Syriac come from a time after the development of MH, it is unlikely that they have been influenced by it; most of the Hebrew influence on Syriac comes in the form of religious terms borrowed from BH. But is it possible that the influence could have gone in the other direction?

The evidence for Aramaic usage is chronologically vast, but, for the earlier dialects, very sparse from the perspective of corpus linguistics. Whenever a new discovery of an early Aramaic text is made, later dialects have to be drawn on for purposes of lexical and grammatical comparison. That this is so often effectively testifies to a rather high degree of homogeneity in the history of Aramaic, perhaps due to the long influence of Imperial Aramaic on its literary expression and to the probable existence of an Aramaic dialect continuum across the Near East that began in the first millennium BCE and lasted until almost the end of the first millennium CE. For this reason, it is justified to draw on all the Aramaic dialects (before the modern period) to reconstruct the Levantine dialect(s) that served as a substratum during the development of MH in the late Second Temple Period.

This has to be done with caution, however, and the later rabbinic Jewish dialects that were in close contact with MH sources should probably be considered as ineligible for this purpose, especially if the relevant *comparanda* are limited to these dialects alone. They might have been influenced by Hebrew. But

Syriac presents a different picture; since it is unlikely to have been influenced by MH, any similarities between the two must be due to parallel development or prior Aramaic influence on MH.

Therefore, the use of *messat* to introduce purpose clauses in Syriac might testify to a broader Aramaic use which formed part of the Aramaic substratum of MH. I am inclined to doubt this, however. The path of development in MH of כְּדֵי is fully documented and presents no sudden leaps, gaps, or oddities that might betray outside influence. The same is true, indeed, of Syriac *messat*, which suggests that this is a case of parallel development. The functional expansion of כְּדֵי is fully explicable in terms of continuous development within Hebrew, beginning from the attested usages in the biblical dialect.[5]

## 3.0. The Particle בִּשְׁבִיל ‘for the sake of, in order that, so that’

בִּשְׁבִיל is a grammaticalised form of the noun שְׁבִיל ‘road, path’, plus the preposition -בְּ. The noun itself occurs twice in the Hebrew Bible (Jer. 18.15; Ps. 77.20), and a few times in Hebrew Ben Sira (5.9) and the Qumran literature (4Q184 1.9; 4Q266 2 ii 3; 4Q275 1.1). It is noticeably more common in Aramaic sources and may be an Aramaic loan in Old Hebrew.

[5] The form בִּכְדֵי seems to have developed later to mark the meaning ‘enough’. It is rare in Tannaitic sources (e.g., t. Kil. 2.12).

In Tannaitic literature, the noun also appears (m. Pe'a 2.1; m. Bava Mets. 2.3; etc.), but is vastly more frequent in its grammaticalised form with -בְּ, as a beneficiary preposition בִּשְׁבִיל 'for, on behalf of' or as a conjunction -שֶׁ בִּשְׁבִיל 'in order to', introducing purpose clauses. The grammaticalised form does not appear in Aramaic.

Since words for 'road, path' are not known to grammaticalise directly into purpose clause particles, some intervening change likely occurred that, in turn, led to the purpose grammaticalisation. This intervening process was probably the use of 'road, path' as a marker of the allative.

Allative morphemes—i.e., those that mark "spatial goals, directions, or destinations" (Rice and Kabata 2007, 452)—are often associated with grammaticalised forms of motion verbs (Heine and Kuteva 2002, 160), but there is no reason why 'path' nouns may not lend themselves equally well for use as allatives. In fact, the prototypical 'path' noun in Old Hebrew, i.e., דֶּרֶךְ, is already used allatively in the Hebrew Bible, with the meaning 'toward': וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ אֶל־יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרְתָּ בָּהּ וְהַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר־בָּנִתִי לִשְׁמֶךָ 'they pray to the LORD toward the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name' (1 Kgs 8.44 *NRSV*). This example is particularly telling, since the verb with which the noun occurs, i.e., 'pray', is not a motion verb, demonstrating that the original nominal meaning of the lexeme was neutralised in this context.

However, this usage of דֶּרֶךְ does not further grammaticalise towards becoming a marker of purpose clauses. Although it is reasonable to suppose that nominal שְׁבִיל, joined to -בְּ, similarly

became an allative marker (*on the way to* > *toward*) and then developed into a purpose clause marker (*toward* > *in order to*, cf. Heine and Kuteva 2002, 39), the process is not documented.

The primary explicit marker of purpose clauses in BH is לְמַעַן, used in much the same way as MH בִּשְׁבִיל; it is not used in MH, except in biblical quotations. It must have been confined to the literary register in the Second Temple Period, and was evidently not present in the hypothetical vernacular Old Hebrew that formed one of the ingredients of MH

However, the particle בְּשֶׁל, a calque of Aramaic בדיל, is used in some Late Biblical Hebrew texts (Jonah and Qohelet), as well as in 4QMMT. In Tannaitic Hebrew, בְּשֶׁל disappears and is replaced by בִּשְׁבִיל. A few examples will suffice to show how they are used in the same way: יהיה הטהר מזה על הטמה בשל שא 'so that the pure might sprinkle on the impure' (4Q394 3–7 i 19), compared to מְנַטֶּפֶת בִּשְׁבִיל שֶׁתְּהֵא 'so that it shall keep dripping' (m. Shab. 2.4); בשל שתשמח 'so that you might rejoice' (4Q398 14–17 ii 6), compared to לְתוֹכָהּ הַדָּם שֶׁיִּכָּנֵס בִּשְׁבִיל 'so that the blood might flow into it' (m. Ḥul. 2.9); as prepositions, cp. בְּשֶׁלִּי הַסַּעַר הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה 'because of me is this great storm' (Jon. 1.12) and בִּשְׁבִילִי נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם 'because of me was the world created' (m. Sanh. 4.5).

בְּשֶׁל, as noted, is a calque on Aramaic בדיל. בִּשְׁבִיל, on the other hand, is not a calque on any Aramaic form, i.e., there is no equivalent Aramaic grammaticalisation which it might have sought to duplicate. Formally, at least, it is purely Hebrew. However, as noted, it functions in the same way as בדיל and בְּשֶׁל, respectively, an Aramaic conjunction/preposition and its Hebrew

calque. In addition to this functional similarity, a rough phonological similarity exists. Yet, the question remains: why did בְּשֶׁל fall out of use to be replaced, as it seems, by בִּשְׁבִיל?

To answer this question, we begin by noting that the sequence בְּ-+שֶׁל does exist in Tannaitic Hebrew, specifically as a combination of two separate morphemes, as in the following examples: כָּל יוֹם הָיָה חוֹתֶה בְּשֶׁל כֶּסֶף וּמְעָרֶה בְּתוֹךְ שֶׁל זָהָב 'every day he used to scoop out *with* (a pan) *of* silver and empty it into (a pan) of gold' (m. Yoma 4.4); בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה תּוֹקְעִין בְּשֶׁל זְכָרִים, וּבַיּוֹבֵל בְּשֶׁל יְעֵלִים 'at the New Year they blow with (horns) of rams, and on the Jubilee with (horns) of wild goats' (m. Rosh ha-Shanah 3.5). The meaning of בְּשֶׁל here is just the meaning of the two morphemes that compose it, -בְּ 'in, with' and שֶׁל 'of'. By contrast, the older particle בְּשֶׁל is monomorphemic with a non-compositional meaning. As a result, the sequence בְּשֶׁל could be ambiguous between a bimorphemic 'with (the one) of' and a monomorphemic reading 'because of'.

Thus, the functions of שֶׁל developed in such a way that it led to ambiguous readings between the monomorphemic preposition בְּשֶׁל 'for the sake of, in order that, so that' and bimorphemic בְּ-+שֶׁל. Although in most cases context would have prevented serious confusion, it is possible that בִּשְׁבִיל became favoured as an unambiguous alternative to monomorphemic בְּשֶׁל. The latest attestation of (conjunctive) בשל is in Mur. 46.7, a letter from Yonatan b. Maḥanaim to Yose b. Galgula around 133 CE: בשל שיבו לו 'so that it would come to him' (*DJD* 2, 165). The earliest attestation of בִּשְׁבִיל, in a fragmentary context, is in Mur. 47.4, a frag-

mentary letter from the same period (*DJD* 2, 167). After this period, monomorphemic בְּשֶׁל is no longer used and בִּשְׁבִיל takes its place.

## 4.0. The Conjunction כֵּיוָן ‘as soon as, when’

The hollow root כ"ו/ן is used to form the adjective כֵּיוָן ‘straight, right, honest’, which has been grammaticalised as a temporal conjunction ‘as, since, as soon as’. The word is likely of Aramaic origin, since Hebrew does not natively form words from hollow roots with consonantal *waw*. In fact, as an adjective, the word appears almost exclusively in Aramaic, in Targums Onkelos and Jonathan: אוֹרְחֵיהּ דְּכֵיוָנָא אֱלָהָא ‘God, whose way is right’ (TJ 2 Sam. 22.31); כָּל דִּמְהַלֵּיךְ בְּזָכוּ וּמְמַלֵּיל כֵּיוָנָן ‘all who walk in innocence and speak right words (TJ Isa. 33.15); וְרַגְלֵיהוֹן רַגְלִין כֵּיוָנָן ‘their legs were straight legs’ (TJ Ezek. 1.7); לָא נָפֵיק דִּינָא כֵּיוָן ‘the law does not go forth rightly’ (TJ Hab. 1.4).

כֵּיוָן is attested only once in Tannaitic Hebrew as a deadjectival adverb. But its appearance as a subordinating conjunction is impossible to understand without assuming a prior history as an adjective or adverb: אֶחָד יוֹרֵד לְאַמַּת הַשֶּׁחִי וְאֶחָד פּוֹתֵחַ כֵּיוָן ‘(as for the two keys,) one goes down (into the lock) as far as the armpit, and the other opens (the door) at that exact moment’ (m. Tamid 3.6). (Another adverbial occurrence is in post-Tannaitic Hebrew: אפשר יעשנה בדפוס ויקבענה כיון ‘it is possible to make it [a Syrian cake] in a mould, and it would shape it right away’ [b. Pesaḥ. 37a].)

In MH, the word כֵּיוָן is used preceding the complementiser -שֶׁ to introduce temporal clauses, 'when, as soon as'. The following examples are typical. It may be temporal and marked for simultaneity: כֵּיוָן שֶׁהִיא נוֹתֶנֶת אֶת הַמַּיִם מַגְבִּהַּ֥ת חַלָּתָהּ 'as soon as she puts the water in, she removes her dough offering' (m. Ḥal. 3.1); כֵּיוָן שֶׁכָּפַר בּוֹ חַיָּיב 'the moment he has denied him, he is liable' (m. Shevu. 5.1); כֵּיוָן שֶׁהִשְׁלִים מֵת 'just as he fulfilled (his vow), he died' (m. Nazir 1.7); or it may be temporal, without the implication of simultaneity: כיון שנתמרח הגורן לא יאכל עד שיעשר 'when the threshing floor is clear, he may not eat until he tithes' (t. Maʿas. 1.6); כיון שעמדו שבטים לים זה אומר אין אני יורד תחלה לים וזה אומר אין אני יורד תחלה לים 'when the tribes stood at the sea, one would say, I am not going in first to the sea, and the other would say, I am not going in first to the sea' (*Mekhilta*, Lauterbach 2004 [1933], I:155, apparatus). In post-Tannaitic Hebrew, it may be causal: כיון שלא שמעו גלו 'because they did not obey, they went into exile' (Lamentations Rabba[6]).

The use of כֵּיוָן as a subordinator is most readily understood as an extension of its use as an adverb in the sense '*just* then, *right* away, at that moment', itself an extension of the adjectival 'true, right, proper'. Partial parallels for the use of words meaning 'right, true, proper' to indicate temporal simultaneity can be found in European languages, such as English *just* ADJ 'right, proper' > *just* ADV 'exactly' (derived from French *juste*) > *just as* (adverbial modifier of conjunction). The extension to causal conjunction does not take place in English.

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[6] Text according to https://web.archive.org/web/20120801081906/http://www.tsel.org/torah/midrashraba/eicha.html.

Although the adjective itself is a borrowing from Aramaic, it is not clear that the extension to temporal subordinator was also borrowed from Aramaic. The extension does occur in later Jewish Aramaic, as in the Palestinian Targums: כיון דנפקו תריהון באפי ברא 'when the two of them went out in the field' (TN Gen. 4.8); וכיוון די אשכחו כתיב בגווה לא תהוון קטולין לא קבילו יתה 'when [or perhaps because] they (the Edomites) found written in it (the Torah) "Don't be killers," they did not receive it' (TN Deut. 33.2). It is also used in Babylonian Aramaic (examples taken from Sokoloff 2002, 574–75): כיון דעתירי מפנקי ולא עבדי עיבידתא 'since the rich are pampered and do no work' (b. Shab. 54a); כיון דאגבהיה נפק לה 'as soon as he lifted it up, he fulfilled his obligation' (b. Pesaḥ. 7b).

How should we assess these Aramaic occurrences? Since the original adjective is itself Aramaic, it is possible that the grammaticalisation occurred in Aramaic, and then entered Hebrew. However, all the Hebrew attestations of the grammaticalised form are uniformly earlier than the Aramaic ones, and there are no Aramaic attestations from non-Jewish dialects. This is consistent with a hypothesis of Jewish Aramaic borrowing from Hebrew, rather than Aramaic interference in Hebrew.

## 5.0. Conclusions

The examples of הוֹאִיל and כְּדֵי suggest that one of the ingredients of MH was a vernacular whose history was continuous with Old Hebrew as documented, as a literary register, in Classical Biblical Hebrew. This implies that the origin of MH does not lie in a dialect separate from BH (against the view of, e.g., Koller 2017, 152–

55). The case of בִּשְׁבִיל suggests later 'off-stage' developments for MH, although not, in this case, with any apparent antecedents in the classical language. The same is true for בֵּינָן, a clear Aramaism, at least in its lexical form, but whose grammaticalisation appears to be solely an internal Hebrew development. Therefore, although contact with Aramaic in the late post-exilic period played an important and determinative role in the development of Hebrew, a complete account must infer the existence of undocumented Hebrew varieties, which continued to evolve before, during, and after the transition to Middle (Mishnaic) Hebrew.

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# RABBINIC HEBREW *KYD* ~ *ʿKYD*: INSIGHTS FROM PALESTINIAN ARABIC*

*Mila Neishtadt*

MS Kaufmann of the Mishna includes two main transmissions: that of the text's scribe and that of its vocaliser. The MS also includes numerous corrections by more than one hand (Bar-Asher 2009–2022, I:212–13). For example, in one case we read:

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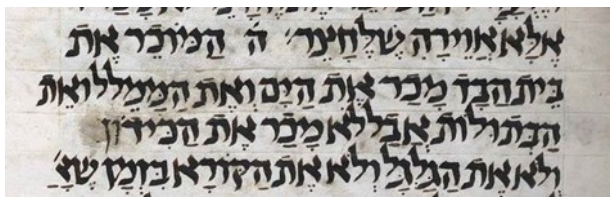
(1) המוכר את בית הבד מכר את הים ואת הממלל ואת הבתולות אבל לא מכר את הכיד()[ון] ולא את הגלגל ולא את הקורא

‘If a man sold an olive-press he has sold also the vat, the grindstone, and the posts, but he has not sold the pressing boards, the wheel, or the beam’. (m. Bava Batra 4.5 [MS Kaufmann p. 283/fol. 145v], trans. Danby 1933, 371)

The word הכיד()[ון] *hkyd()[wn]* is especially notable in terms of history of transmission. The ending of הכיד *hkyd* in MS Kaufmann was deliberately deleted. The ink at the end of the original word was scraped and corrected with two thinner letters—ון *wn*—in a slightly lighter colour of ink. This type of correction, the shape of the letters, and the colour of the ink are all typical of the manuscript’s vocaliser, who, using various methods, occasionally corrected the text (Mastey 2018, 80–81).[1] The current version reads הכיד()[ון] *hkyd()[wn]* and is vocalised הַכִּידוֹן *hak-kīḏōn* (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: m. Bava Batra 4.5, MS Kaufmann A50, p. 283/fol. 145v[2]



[1] A similar correction made by the vocaliser is discussed in detail in Mastey (2014, 84).

[2] Courtesy of the Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The meaning of the word כִּידֹון *kīḏōn* ‘javelin, short sword, scimitar’ (*HALOT* 472) does not fit naturally among the various olive press terms mentioned in this passage. Moreover, a comparison of the corresponding orthographic words in other Rabbinic MSS reveals numerous variants.

In this article, I seek to identify the original version(s) and meaning of הַכִּידֹון *hak-kīḏōn* (m. Bava Batra 4.5, MS Kaufmann), to explain the multiple MSS variants, and to suggest possible etymological directions.

## 1.0. Rabbinic Hebrew MSS Variants of *hak-kīḏōn* in m. Bava Batra 4.5 (MS Kaufmann)

### 1.1. M. Bava Batra 4.5/b. Bava Batra 67b

Numerous variations of the word in question are attested in Rabbinic Hebrew (RH) MSS:

Table 1: m. Bava Batra 4.5 MSS

| | |
|---|---|
| MS Kaufmann A50 | הַכִּידֹ()[ון] *hak-kīḏ()[ōn]* |
| MS Parma, De Rossi 138 | הכירים *h-kyrym* |
| MS Cambridge Add.470.1 | העי)בידים *h-ʿ(y)bydym* |
| MS Saint-Petersburg Yevr. III B 202 | הַכִּידִים *hak-kīḏīm* |
| MS Cambridge T-S NS 329.603 | הכידים *h-kydym* |

Table 2: b. Bava Batra 67b MSS

| **MS** | **Mishna** | **Talmud** |
|---|---|---|
| MS Hamburg 165 | העבדים *h-ʿbdym* | עבידים *ʿbydym*<br>העבדים *h-ʿbydym* |
| MS Florence II.1.8–9 | העכירין *h-ʿkyryn* | עבירין *ʿbyryn*<br>העכירין *h-ʿkyryn* |
| vol. I, fol. 198[3] | העכירין *h-ʿkyryn* | — |
| MS Vatican ebr. 115.[b] | העבירין *h-ʿbyryn* | עכירין *ʿkyryn*<br>העבורין *h-ʿbwryn* |
| MS Munich 95 | העמודי' *h-ʿmwdy'* | עמודי' *ʿmwdy'*<br>העמודי' *h-ʿmwdy'* |
| MS Oxford 369 (Cat. Neubauer) | הע?כ/ב?ירים *h-ʿ?k/b?yrym*<br>העמודי' *h-ʿmwdy'*[4] | עכירים *ʿkyrym*<br>העמודים *h-ʿmwdym* |
| MS Paris Suppl. Heb. 1337 | העכירין *h-ʿkyryn* | עכירין *ʿkyryn*<br>העכירין *h-ʿkyryn* |
| MS Frankfurt Carmeliter 4 | העבירי' *h-ʿbyry'* | — |
| MS Escorial Gl-3 | העמודים *h-ʿmwdym* | עמודין *ʿmwdyn*<br>העמודים *h-ʿmwdym* |
| Editio princeps (Pesaro 1509–1516) | עבירים *ʿbyrym* | סידים *sydym*<br>העבירים *h-ʿbyrym* |

Based on this presentation, we already note that all the variants end with a plural suffix, *-ym* ~ *-yn*, or a shortened *-y'* version thereof. It is, therefore, fair to assume that the original word in MS Kaufmann was in all probability a plural form,[5] ending with the plural suffix *-ym* or *-yn*. The first option, *-ym*, seems a better fit, based on several considerations: (1) all the

[3] An erroneous double copying of the relevant page (vol. II, fol. 57) is found in vol. I, fol. 198 (Sussmann 2012, I:61).

[4] The version העמודי' *h-ʿmwdy'* appears as an addition: מכר את העכירים ולא העמודי'.

[5] The plural form is also evident in b. Bava Batra 67b, where the word in question is explained by the plural form כבשי *kbšy* 'presses' (see §2.0 below).

other m. Bava Batra 4.5 MSS have the plural ending *-ym*; (2) the plural suffix *-ym* is statistically more frequent than the plural suffix *-yn* in nouns in MS Kaufmann;[6] (3) the scraped area is larger than the space required by a final *nun* ; (4) had the plural ending been *-yn*, then instead of scraping away the word's ending, the vocaliser could have effortlessly extended the foot of the *yod* in the plural ending ין- into ון-; (5) examining the ink shades on the other side of the vellum also supports the hypothesis of an original plural *-ym* suffix.[7] All these considerations suggest הכידים *h-kydym* as the most probable original variant of the corrected הַכִּידוֹן *hak-kīḏōn* in m. Bava Batra 4.5, MS Kaufmann. This reconstructed version is suggested in the critical editions of the Mishna (Historical Dictionary Project 2019, 170; Heijmans f.c.) and in Bar-Asher (2015, I:116). We shall return to these variants in the analysis in §1.3 below.

## 1.2. M. Kelim 12.8/t. Kelim Bava Batra 7.12

### 1.2.1. M. Kelim 12.8

The abovementioned reconstructed הכידים *h-kydym* in m. Bava Batra 4.5 is reminiscent of m. Kelim 12.8 (MS Kaufmann):

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[6] For further details, see Naeh (1993, 384–88) and Mor (f.c.). Detailed statistics are available for MS Kaufmann order Zeraʿim: the distribution of the plural suffixes in nouns is 83.3 percent *-ym* versus 16.7 percent *-yn* (Yaʿakov 2005, 52).

[7] For the application of this technique to the MS Kaufmann vocaliser's corrections, see Mastey (2014, 85–95).

(2) האולר [ו]הקולמוס והמטולטל(ו)ת והמשקלות והכידים והכן והכנה טמאין
'The penknife, pen, plummet, weights, pressing-plates, measuring-rod, and measuring tables are susceptible to uncleanness.' (m. Kelim 12.8, trans. Danby 1933, 622)

In m. Kelim 12.8 (MS Kaufmann) we find וְהַכִּידִּים *wə-hak-kīḏīm*, without any corrections made by the vocaliser. There the word comes after וְהַמִּשְׁקָלוֹת *wə-ham-mišqå̄lōṯ* 'and the weights' which, for its part, is preceded by וְהַמְּטוּלְטֶל(ו)ת *wə-ham-məṭulṭɛlɛṯ* 'the plummet'. The attestation in other MSS of m. Kelim 12.8 can be summarised as follows:

Table 3: Other textual witnesses to m. Kelim 12.8

| | |
|---|---|
| MS Kaufmann A50 | וְהַכִּידִּים *wə-hak-kīḏīm* |
| MS Parma, De Rossi 497 | וְהַכִּידִּין *wə-hak-kīḏīn* |
| MS Parma, De Rossi 138 | וְהַכִּידִּים *wə-hak-kīḏīm* |
| MS Cambridge Add.470.1 | והכירון *w-h-kyrwn* |
| MS Cambridge T–S E1.125 | הכירים *h-kyrym* |
| MS Cambridge T–S E2.90 | והכידין *w-h-kydyn* |

### 1.2.2. T. Kelim Bava Batra 7.12

Tractate Kelim lacks a counterpart reference in both the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmudim, but has a counterpart in the Tosefta, t. Kelim Bava Batra 7.12 (MS Vienna Cod. Hebrew 20):

(3) האולד והקולמוסין והמטלטלות והמשקלות והעתידין והכן והכנה של זכוכית טהורין
'Glass penknife, pens, plummets, weights, ?, measuring-rod, and measuring table are pure.' (t. Kelim Bava Batra 7.12, trans. Neusner 1977–1986 VI:80, adapted)

Here we find several differences compared to the Mishnaic text. The relevant one is that instead of MS Kaufmann וְהַכִּידִּים *wə-hak-kīḏīm*, we find the entirely different plural form והעתידין *w-h-ʿtydyn* in both MS Vienna Cod. Hebrew 20 and *editio princeps* Venice, 1521.

In his *Tosefet Rishonim*, Lieberman cited the Tosefta version of ha-Rash, the twelfth–thirteenth-century Rabbi Samson ben Abraham of Sens: והכן והעכידים והמטולטלת והמשקלות והקולמוס האולר והכנה של זכוכית טהורין. Ha-Rash explained the version והעכידים *w-h-ʿkydym* as a variant of the Mishnaic והכידים *w-h-kydym*, the two words denoting the same thing. Lieberman also cited והעוברות *w-h-ʿwbrwt*, an alternative version of והעתידין *w-h-ʿtydyn* in t. Kelim Bava Batra 7.12, which appeared in the printed editions of *Sefer ha-Keritut* by Rabbi Samson of Chinon (twelfth–thirteenth century). Lieberman noted that the Tosefta variant והעתידין *w-h-ʿtydyn* is unreliable and the correct version was likely והעכידים *w-h-ʿkydym*, as suggested by ha-Rash, or alternatively עכירים *ʿkyrym* or עבירים *ʿbyrym*, the latter being close to the והעוברות *w-h-ʿwbrwt* version of Rabbi Samson of Chinon (Lieberman 1937–1939, III: 95, 598).

## 1.3. Analysis of MSS Textual Variants

Thus far I have mentioned over a dozen variants of the word in question. Occasionally more than one variant appears within the same MS. Some further variants are found in other sources, e.g., הכדים *h-kdym*, עבודים *ʿbwdym*, and בידים *b-ydym* (Epstein 1921–1924, I:27, fns 9–11).

All the variants can be primarily divided into two groups: variants with and without an initial *ʿayin*. This primary division does not seem to be arbitrary. With only two exceptions,[8] the variants with an initial *ʿayin* are typical of the Babylonian Talmud and the Tosefta MSS, whereas the variants without an initial *ʿayin* are typical of Mishnaic MSS.

Each of the two primary groups can be divided according to frequent alternations between two pairs of letters: כ/ב and ר/ד. Three additional variants have a different letter instead of the first pair: *mem* in עמוד *ʿmwd*, *tav* in עתיד *ʿtyd*, and *samekh* in סיד *syd*. These data can be summarised as follows:

Table 4: Categorisation of variants

| | **No Initial *ʿayin*** | | **Initial *ʿayin*** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Second ד** | **Second ר** | **Second ד** | **Second ר** |
| **First כ** | כיד | כיר | עכיד | עכיר |
| | כיד()[ון] | כירון | | |
| | כד | | | |
| **First ב** | ביד | | עביד | עביר |
| | | | עבד | עובר |
| | | | ע(י)ביד | |
| | | | עבוד | עבור |
| | סיד | | עמוד | |
| | | | עתיד | |

[8] See m. Bava Batra 4.5 MS Cambridge Add.470.1 הע(י)בידים *h-ʿ(y)bydym* and the Babylonian Talmud *editio princeps* (Pesaro 1509–1516), in which one of the versions in b. Bava Batra 67b is סידים *sydym*.

## 2.0. Traditional and Modern Exegesis

Despite the great variation, the Babylonian Talmud explains the m. Bava Batra 4.5 (MS Kaufmann) הַכִּידּוֹן *hak-kīḏōn* as כבשי *kbšy* ‘presses’, an interpretation which might be appropriate in an oil-pressing context yet does not explicitly indicate what these ‘presses’ were.

Epstein’s (1921–1924, I:27) *Der Gaonäische Kommentar zur Ordnung Teharoth*, an early commentary on order Ṭoharot, already makes a connection between m. Kelim 12.8 and b. Bava Batra 67b: והכירין כדא' בבאבי אחרן מאי עבירין כבשי ואי' דא' כידין ‘*w-hkyryn*, as in another version in another chapter [Bava Batra 67b]: “What is *ʿbyryn*? ‘Presses’, and some say *kydyn*.”’

Later commentaries are more detailed, and various meanings have been suggested. *The Mainz Commentary* (eleventh–twelfth centuries), an early Ashkenazi commentary formerly attributed to Rabbenu Gershom, explains b. Bava Batra 67b as follows: עכירין כיבשי אותן קצצים [קצעין] של בקעת שנותנים על הקרשים בין הקרשים ובין הקורה כשעוצרין הקורה ‘*ʿkyryn*: presses, those cut chips of slivers of wood that are put on the boards, between the boards and the beam when the beam is pressed’ (Leitner 1998, 153–54).

Two other meanings are suggested in *Sefer he-ʿArukh* by Nathan ben Yeḥi’el of Rome (eleventh century):

> (a) s.v. עכירים ~ עכירין *kyrym* ~ *ʿkyryn*: ופי' כבשי והם גלגלי אבנים נקובות באמצע וטוחנין וכובשין בהן הזתים ‘and one interpretation is “presses” and they are big rounded stones pierced in the middle, used for the crushing and pressing of olives’ (Kohut 1878–1892, VI:199); (b) s.v. כבשי *kbšy*: כירין כבשי הם קורות שכובשין בהן הזיתים ‘*kyryn*: presses, they are beams for olive pressing’ (Kohut 1878–1892, IV:191).

A similar meaning—'pressing boards'—is found in multiple later sources. It appears as one of the explanations in a later twelfth-century commentary on tractate Bava Batra by the Maghrebi Rabbi Zecharia ben Yehuda Aġmātī:

> עכידים כיבשי והוא כמו לוחים ועצים שנותנין אותן על הקופות של זתים וגם על [החרצנים של] ענבים הדרוכים כדי שתרד עליהם הקורה וכובשת אותם ומוציאה כל [מה] שבתוכם
>
> '*ʿkydym* means presses, and this is like boards and logs that are placed on the baskets of olives and on [the pips of] trodden grapes so that the beam descends upon them, presses them, and extracts everything out of them' (Leveen 1961, 240).

The thirteenth-century Rabbi Meir ben Todros Ha-Levi Abulafia (Spain) offers a similar explanation for עבידין *ʿbydyn* (Shulman 1989–1993, II:468).

In Maimonides's commentary on the Mishna (m. Bava Batra 4.5), according to his autograph (MS Oxford, Pococke 295, fol. 27v), we find הַכִּדִּין *hak-kīḏīn*, which is spelled with a *yod* after *kaf* later in the commentary:

> וכִּידִּין אלת'קלאת אלתי תת'קל בהא אלאועיה אלתי פיהא אלזיתון ועליהא תתעלק אלחג'ר אלפוקאניה
>
> 'and *kīḏīn*: the weights with which the vessels with olives are weighed and on which the upper stone is fixed' (Qafiḥ 1963–1969, Neziqin, 116).

In *Mishne Tora* (Hilkhot Mekhira 25.8), which relates to b. Bava Batra 67b, Maimonides explained it as follows: הכובשין שמכבשין בהן הזיתים 'the presses for pressing olives' (Shailat 2004–2021, XII:73). The same word is interpreted entirely differently in the

context of m. Kelim 12.8: וכידים[9] דהוק מן חדיד ירכז בהא אלזיתון פי אלמעאצר ‘and *kydym* are iron poles by which the olives are pressed in the olive production facilities’ (Qafiḥ 1963–1969, Ṭeharot 1, 127). The same explanation appears in *Mishne Tora* (Hilkhot Kelim 9.16): והכידיים[10] שלברזל שחובטין בהן הזיתים ‘and the iron *kydyym* for beating the olives’ (Shailat 2004–2021, X:227). It seems that Maimonides essentially suggested different meanings: in b. Bava Batra 67b he understood the word as ‘weights’ or ‘presses’, whereas in m Kelim 12.8 he interpreted the word as ‘iron poles’. It is only the second meaning that appears in *al-Murshid al-Kāfī*, a lexicon on Maimonides’ *Mishne Tora* by Tanḥum ha-Yerushalmi (thirteenth century), s.v. *kyd*: וקיל אן כידין מראזב חדיד או מטארק יכסר בהא אלזיתון ‘And it is said that *kydyn* are iron bars or hammers with which olives are crushed’ (Shy 2005, 252).

The Maghrebi Rabbi Zecharia ben Yehuda Aġmātī offers another explanation, along with the above-mentioned ‘pressing boards’: עמודין *ʿmwdyn* and according to another version עכידין ‘*ʿkydyn* were the screws (אלמגאזל *al-maġāzil*) of the press that lift up the big weight-stone’ (Leveen 1961, 240).

---

[9] According to another MS: והכורים *w-h-kwrym* (Qafiḥ 1963–1969, Ṭeharot 1, 127).

[10] The form והכידיים *w-h-kydyym* with a dual plural suffix is based on the British Library, MS Or. 2421, fol. 134v. According to other editions: והכירייים *w-h-kyryym* (Warsaw-Vilna ed. reprinted in Shailat’s edition: Shailat 2004–2021, 187), והכירים *w-h-kyrym* (Frankel 1993, 250), and והכידים *w-h-kydym* (Qafiḥ 1993, 298).

In modern research, the word in question is mentioned in the nineteenth-century dictionary by Jacob Levy, who considered כירים *kyrym* or כירין *kyryn* to be a shortened version of the singular form עכיר **ʿkyr*. He mentioned some of the other variants and understood the word to refer to 'big round stones' that were rolled back and forth on the pressing boards of the press with the aim of pressing the olives beneath (Levy 1876–1889, II:324). Marcus Jastrow listed the variant עֲכִירִים *ʿăḵīrīm* or עֲכִירִין *ʿăḵīrīn* as "stirrers, implement connected with the wine or oil press for stirring up the pulp, loadstones (?), screws (?)" (Jastrow 1903, II:1078).

Alexander Kohut, who edited *Sefer he-ʿArukh* by Nathan ben Yeḥiʾel, addressed the numerous versions of the word and, after mentioning the version העמודין *h-ʿmwdyn*, at the end expressed his own opinion by adding ואולי נכון הוא 'and perhaps this is correct' (Kohut 1878–1892, IV:191, fn. 2).

In his *Talmudische Archäologie*, Samuel Krauss (1910–1913, II:599–600, fn. 536) followed one of the traditional interpretations and suggested the word denoted round pressing boards made of solid wood that were placed over the mass of the crushed olives or grapes, so that pressure could spread evenly over the surface. He considered עבירים *ʿbyrym* to be the correct variant, possibly connected to the Hebrew *hifʿil* verb העביר 'pass (tr.)' (Krauss 1910–1913, II:223). He nonetheless remarked on the other variants as well (II:599–600, fn. 536). Krauss understood the variant עמודים *ʿmwdym* ~ עמודין *ʿmwdyn* as 'two posts holding the olive mass together' (II:223). In his view, עמודים *ʿmwdym* may once have appeared in the Mishna alongside עבירים *ʿbyrym*; however, since the word עמודים *ʿmwdym* 'pillars' was intelligible and

hence received no comment in the Talmud, it was eventually dropped from the Mishnaic text (II:599–600, fn. 536).

In his research on oil production in the Holy Land in the Tannaitic period, Felix Goldmann (1907, 20 fn. 2, 22, fn. 1) mentioned that both the etymology and the correct reading of the relevant word in m. Bava Batra 4.5 were unclear. In his view, the m. Kelim 12.8 connection does not clarify the matter, since many variants prevail there as well. Goldmann (1907, 22) disagreed with Jastrow's 'screw' interpretation and suggested that עכיר *ʿkyr* was one of the large press weight-stones fixed at the end of the press's beam.

From an archaeological point of view, Goldmann's suggestion was adopted by Rafael Frankel, who identified the press mentioned in m. Bava Batra 4.5 as the complex lever-and-weights press (see Figure 3, below). Frankel added an important semantic consideration based on m. Kelim 12.8. There the word in question appears after two smaller types of weights (MS Kaufmann): וְהַמְּטוּלְטֶלֶ(ו)ת *wə-ham-məṭulṭɛlɛṯ* 'a plummet' (small sized) and וְהַמִּשְׁקָלוֹת *wə-ham-mišqå̄lōṯ* 'and the weights' (medium sized). The 'press weight-stone' fits perfectly as the largest of the weights, arranged in ascending order by size. Frankel used the variant עכיר *ʿkyr* in his 1986 study, yet later he preferred עכיד *ʿkyd*, without providing any considerations to support either variant (Frankel 1986, 58–59; 1996, 212; 1999, 189–90).

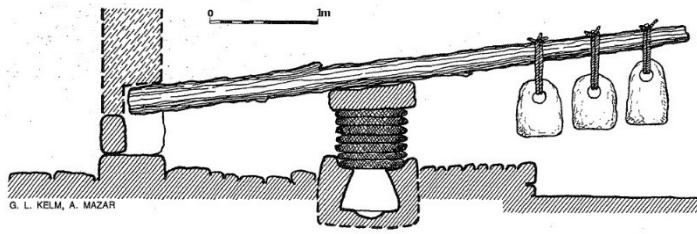
## 3.0. The Material Culture of Traditional Olive Presses

Pressing is one of the stages in traditional olive oil production. The word [וּן]()הכיד *h-kyd()[wn]* in m. Bava Batra 4.5 (MS Kaufmann) appears in what is clearly a context of olive press terminology, in which the קוֹרָא *qōrå̄* [*sic*, otherwise קורה] 'beam' is mentioned.

Several types of presses are known from both Palestinian ethnographic studies and archaeological findings. Gustaf Dalman (1928–1942, IV:201–55) described the traditional pre-industrial olive oil production in the Holy Land at the beginning of the twentieth century in detail. Rafael Frankel (1999, 159–61 and Map 41 there; 2009, 1–18) has presented an accessible illustrated summary.

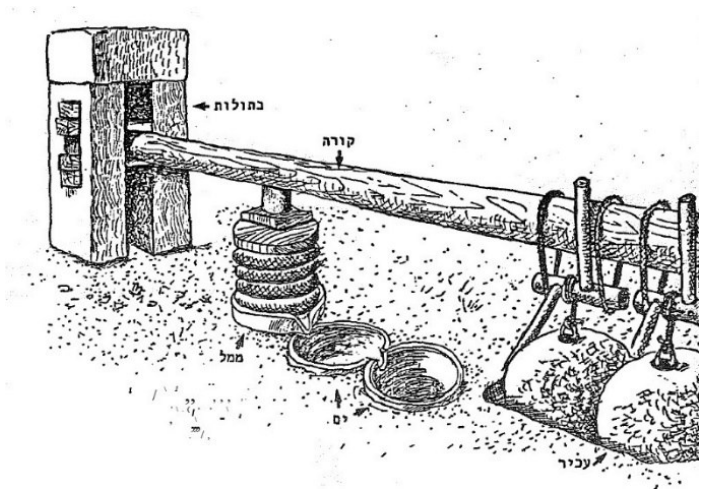
One of the types of presses is the lever-press. This type of press has a beam that is anchored at one end and acts as a lever. Force exerted on the free end of the beam brings pressure to bear on the crushed olives, which are placed below the beam in flat baskets (Frankel 2009, 4). The oldest subtype of lever-press is the simple lever-and-weights press, which was used in Iron Age Southern Levant. Force was applied by means of weights hung on the beam, as we can see in Figure 2 (facing page).

Figure 2: Simple lever-and-screw weights olive press, used in Tel Baṭash (biblical Timna) during the Iron Age (Frankel 1994, 39)



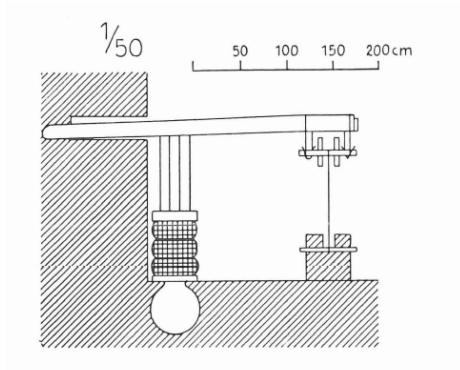

In later periods, the lever-and-weights press became larger and more complex, as seen in Figure 3, a reconstruction of the complex lever-and-weights press at Khirbet Zibdī in the Galilee (Frankel 1994, 44). It is this type of press that Frankel connects to the press mentioned in m. Bava Batra 4.5, with *ʿkyr* being the name for a weight-stone (Frankel 1986, 58–59).

Figure 3: Parts of a press in m. Bava Batra 4.5, according to Frankel (1986, 59)



Pre-industrial lever-and-weights presses were still in use in Palestine in the first quarter of the twentieth century, as we see in Figure 4 (see also: Dalman 1928–1942, IV:214–15).

Figure 4: Dalman's (1928–1942, IV: Bilderanhang 56) sketch of a lever-and-weights press equipped with a winch, in al-Ṭafīle, Transjordan



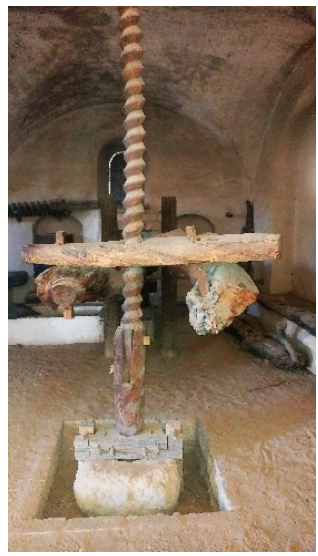

A chronologically later subtype of lever-press, typical of the Byzantine period onwards, is the lever-and-screw press. Similar pre-industrial presses were used in Palestine, as we see in Figure 5 (facing page), which shows two different olive oil production processes. In the background of the picture, we observe a crushing installation: a horizontal, circular crushing basin and a vertical crushing wheel pulled by a working animal walking in circles. In the foreground of the photograph, we see a lever-and-screw olive press.

The screw weight-stone is buried in a pit and cannot be seen in the photo. The screw measures about four metres in height. The screw weight-stone is fitted to the bottom of the screw with the help of a wooden 'collar' (Dalman 1928–1942, IV:218–9; Frankel 1994, 50–61).

Figure 5: Lever-and-screw olive press operating in Bēt Sāḥūr, 1934–1939 (image: the American Colony, Jerusalem, G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, accessed 26 December 2024, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019694385)

A reconstructed model of the lever-and-screw olive press exhibited at MUSA, the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel-Aviv (Figure 6, overleaf) allows a closer look at this traditional oil industry implement. The model is made of original parts from the Galilee (the weight-stone of the lever-and-screw press) and Samaria (the screw and the nut plank), with the 'collar' added according to the parts of a press found *in situ* in ʿAyn Ḥawḍ, an Arab village at the foot of Mount Carmel. Figures 7a and 7b (overleaf) show close-up photographs of the screw weight-stone.

Figure 6: Reconstruction of a lever-and-screw olive press, MUSA, the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel-Aviv (image: Dr Etan Ayalon)



Figures 7a and 7b: Close-up photos of the screw weight-stone in MUSA, the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel-Aviv (images: Dr Etan Ayalon)

Evidence of lever-and-screw presses in common use dates only to the Byzantine period, more than one hundred years after the final redaction of the Mishna (Frankel 2009, 5–6). It is therefore unlikely that the passage in question (m. Bava Batra 4.5) refers to a lever-and-screw press. Additionally, a major component of this press, the לוּלָב *lūlāḇ* 'screw', goes unmentioned there. For these reasons, archaeologists have identified the press in m.

Bava Batra 4.5 as the complex lever-and-weights type of press illustrated in Figure 3 previously (Frankel 1986, 58–59).

## 4.0. Dalman's Attestation of Palestinian Arabic Oil Press Terminology and Identification of m. Bava Batra 4.5 *h-kyd()[wn]* (MS Kaufmann)

The common term for the screw weight-stone (see Figures 7a and 7b above) in a lever-and-screw olive press in Palestinian Arabic is *lakkīd* (Dalman 1928–1942, IV:217ff). The probable connection between the Palestinian Arabic *lakkīd* and *h-kyd()[wn]* in MS Kaufmann and its numerous variants in other MSS was mentioned by Gustaf Dalman, who listed the variant עְכִיר *ʿåk̲īr* 'Gewicht der Ölpresse' in his dictionary (Dalman 1922, 312), but later on considered it uncertain. Dalman owned a facsimile edition of MS Kaufmann, on which the correction can be clearly seen,[11] but he apparently did not notice it and thus suspected that הכיד()[ון] *h-kyd()[wn]* was likely a corruption of the original הכידין *h-kydyn*, hesitantly noting: "Wenn *kīdīn* die richtige Leseart ist, könnte man allenfalls *lakkīd*, die Arabische Bezeichnung des Pressgewichts zum Vergleiche heranziehen ('If *kīdīn* is the correct reading, then *lakkīd*, the Arabic term for the press weight, might possibly be drawn upon for comparison')" (Dalman 1928–1942, IV:233).

I was unable to find any attestation of *lakkīd* in other Arabic dialects or in Classical Arabic. It also seems to be absent from

[11] This information became available to me after visiting Dalman's personal library at the Gustaf Dalman Institute in Greifswald.

other written attestations of Palestinian Arabic oil industry terminology. The *l* in *lakkīd* may be reconstructed as deriving from the Arabic definite article *al-* in a process of reanalysis and backformation (see the details in §5.0 below). Given the original הכידים *h-kydym* (in MS Kaufmann and other MSS) in the context of olive press parts, a substrate relationship between Mishnaic כִּיד *kīḏ* and Palestinian Arabic *lakkīd* seems convincing.

The Palestinian realia term *lakkīd* confirms כ and ד as the correct consonants of this obscure RH word and provides a reliable identification of singular כיד *kyd* as the press weight-stone. Given כ and ד as the original consonants, it seems that the correct variant with an initial *ʿayin* is עכידים *ʿkydym* ~ עכידין *ʿkydyn*, the plural form of עכיד *ʿkyd*. This variant is attested in Aġmātī's commentary (see §2.0 above).

The variants containing ב and ר instead of the original כ and ד, respectively, are scribal corruptions caused by the resemblance of these respective pairs of letters.[12] Some of the erroneous variants resulted from the replacement of a rare, incomprehensible word with a known, common alternative based on the similarity of letter shape, e.g., העבדים *h-ʿbdym* 'the slaves' (MS Hamburg 165), which does not fit the context of the sentence in which it appears, or the more compelling variant העמודים *h-ʿmwdym* 'the pillars' (MS Munich 95, MS Oxford 369, and MS Escorial Gl-3). Samuel Krauss's suggestion, that עמודים *ʿmwdym* may once have appeared in the Mishna and was later dropped (see §2.0 above),

[12] For cases of possible ד and ר interchange in Hebrew and Late Jewish Aramaic due to phonemic proximity and blurring of /d/ and /r/, see Howard (2022).

seems radical. A more plausible explanation is that the MSS that have the plural forms of עמוד *ʿmwd* 'pillar' in b. Bava Batra 67b are examples of a later scribal corruption caused by the resemblance of the sequence כי (or the corrupted בי) to the letter מ *mem*. Alternatively, *kaf* alone, particularly if vocalised with a *dagesh*, כּ, also resembles a *mem*. The same tendency may explain the less syntactically successful variant with *tav*, namely והעתידין *w-h-ʿtydyn* 'and are about to' in t. Kelim Bava Batra 7.12 (MS Vienna Cod. Hebrew 20).

Gustaf Dalman attested Palestinian Arabic *lakkīd* only in the context of the lever-and-screw type of press—a press that dates to a period later than that of the final redaction of the Mishna (early third century CE). Moreover, the form כידים *kydym* is mentioned in the plural in the Mishna, which makes it difficult to identify the Mishnaic plural כידים *kydym* as a single weight-stone in the lever-and-screw press. However, these problems are easily resolvable. The plural form might refer to the plural weights in the earlier, complex lever-and-weights type of press, as suggested above (Frankel 1994, 41). The semantics of this word may well have 'progressed' with the development of the oil press, continuing to denote the press weight-stone in the later, more advanced lever-and-screw press.

## 5.0. Linguistic Analysis and Etymological Leads

The Palestinian Arabic substrate word *lakkīd* offers more than just confirmation that the original pair of consonants were כ and ד and identification of the meaning of RH כיד *kyd* ~ עכיד *ʿkyd*. A diachronic linguistic analysis of this word may also explain the

Babylonian MSS variants with an initial *ʿayin* and their connection to Mishnaic variants without that letter.

As mentioned above, the *l* in the Palestinian Arabic *lakkīd* likely derives from the Arabic definite article *al-* in a process of reanalysis and back-formation. This process is attested in other Aramaisms in Syro-Palestinian colloquial Arabic, originally beginning with an initial Aramaic *ʾa-,* for example:

**ʾattūn* > **al-ʾattūn* > *lattūn* 'limekiln'

**ʾāḇūt* > **al-ʾābūt* > *lābūt* 'scraper fitted at the non-pointed end of the goad'

Hence, possibly:

**ʾakkīd* > **al-ʾakkīd* > *lakkīd*

Given the morphology of Arabic *lakkīd*, a similar process cannot be fluently explained without the reconstructed stage **ʾakkīd* with an initial glottal stop, a version that has not survived in any of the existing Hebrew MSS witnesses. A follow-up question would be: how can this reconstruction be reconciled with the two established original versions כיד *kyd* and עכיד *ʿkyd*?[13]

There are two possible ways of explaining the reconstructed initial glottal stop in **ʾakkīd*.

## 5.1. *kid* > **ʾakkid* ~ *ʿakkid*

The first possibility is that the reconstructed **ʾakkid* has an initial non-radical *ʾalef* before a consonant followed by a vowel (prosthetic *ʾalef*). Similar instances of a prosthetic *ʾalef* are found in

[13] Hereafter transcribed *kid* and *ʿakkid*, respectively.

Biblical Hebrew, such as הָאֲבַטִּחִים *hå-ʾăḇaṭṭīḥīm* ‘melons’ (Num. 11.5), אֲבַעְבֻּעֹת/אֲבַעְבֹּעֹת *ʾăḇaʿbūʿōṯ* ‘blisters, ulcers’ (Exod. 9.9–10), as well as in the biblical doublet with and without *ʾalef*: בָּאזִקִים *bå-(ʾ)ziqqīm* (Jer. 40.1) ~ הָאזִקִים *hå-(ʾ)ziqqīm* (Jer. 40.4) and בְּזִקִּים *bə-ziqqīm* ‘fetters, manacles’ (e.g., Ps. 149.8) (Bauer and Leander 1922, §61-Oε; JM §17a, §88La). Among similar prosthetic *ʾalef* doublets in RH are גִּיס *gīs* ~ אֶגִּיס *ʾăgīs* ‘brother-in-law’ (Bar-Asher 2015, I:131; Sharvit 2016, 361–62) and גּוּדָּל *guddå̄l* ~ אֲגוּדָּל *ʾăguddå̄l* ‘thumb’ (Bar-Asher 2015, II:1074–75; Sharvit 2016, 361).

David Talshir (1992, 285–86) suggested that the original role of this type of *ʾalef* was morphological: to expand short monosyllabic words into longer, triliteral ones. This suggestion seems to fit the present case quite well, although it clearly does not work in case of longer words, such as הָאֲבַטִּחִים *hå-ʾăḇaṭṭīḥīm* ‘melons’ or אֲבַעְבֻּעֹת/אֲבַעְבֹּעֹת *ʾăḇaʿbūʿōṯ* ‘blisters, ulcers’.

The word עכיד *ʿakkid* with *ʿayin*, likely the correct version of the Babylonian Talmud, may then reflect an *ʾalef* ~ *ʿayin* alternation **ʾakkid* ~ *ʿakkid*. Such alternations are not rare in RH, regardless of the consonant’s position in the word, e.g., אֲנִיצֵי פִּשְׁתָּן *ʾănīṣē pištå̄n* ~ עֲנִיצֵי פִּשְׁתָּן *ʿănīṣē pištå̄n* ‘flax fibers’, רְעִי *rɛʿi* ~ רְאִי *rɛʾi* ‘animal faeces’, מַרְדֵּא *mardē* ~ מַרְדֵּעַ *mardēaʿ* ‘goad’ (Henshke 2011, 185–87; Bar-Asher 2015, I:625–26, 737; Sharvit 2016, 35–36, 73, 100–01). The difficulty with this explanation is that there are no known examples of *ʾalef* ~ *ʿayin* alternation in the case of a prosthetic *ʾalef*.

### 5.2. *ʿakkid* ~ **ʾakkid* > *kid*

*Prima facie*, the second explanation is linguistically simpler. We can consider the possibility of development in the opposite direction, i.e., view the form עכיד *ʿakkid* with initial *ʿayin* as the original form. The version **ʾakkid* with an initial glottal stop can then be seen as yet another example of guttural weakening, a frequent phenomenon in both Rabbinic (Sharvit 2016, 20–22) and Samaritan Hebrew (Ben-Ḥayyim 2000, 38–43), as well as in the local Western Late Aramaic dialects (for Galilean Aramaic see: Kutscher 1976, 67–96; for Christian Aramaic see: Bar-Asher 1977, 367–420; for Samaritan Aramaic see: Tal 2013, 27). The shorter version כיד *kid* found in the Mishnaic MSS is then explicable as a shortened version of the reconstructed intermediary **ʾakkid* due to loss of an initial glottal stop—a process opposite to that of the addition of a prosthetic *ʾalef* to monosyllabic words (Talshir 1992, 286).

Jacob Levy (1876–1889, II:324) long ago suggested that the relationship between the two variants is one of contraction, i.e., *ʿakkid* > *kid*, according to the correct variant. The reconstructed stage **ʾakkid* would allow us to explain this shortening more convincingly, although similar cases in RH are mostly attested in proper names, e.g., אבא *ʾabba* ~ בא *ba*, אליעזר *eliʿezer* ~ ליעזר *liʿezer* (Sharvit 2016, 370–1). An example of a common noun is אָוָּז *ʾăwā̆z* ~ וַז *waz* ‘sort of domestic bird’ (Bar-Asher 2015, 792).

The main difficulty with this explanation relates to chronology—namely, the different language versions of the Mishna. These divide roughly into the Palestinian branch, evident in the MSS of the Mishna itself, and the Babylonian branch, evident in

the Mishna as cited in MSS of the Babylonian Talmud. These two branches differ in many ways: in spelling, pronunciation, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary, as well as differences in the text (Bar-Asher 2009–2022, I:76–108). If we consider the form עכיד *ʿakkid* with an initial *ʿayin* the original form, then this would be one of the cases in which it is the Babylonian tradition that preserves the original Palestinian form of RH. This is not a far-fetched scenario, as has been previously discussed (Bar-Asher 2009–2022, I:100–06; Brody 2015, 3–4) and should thus be taken into consideration. A more chronologically problematic aspect would be that, according to this analysis, the late shorter form כיד *kid*, which represents the Palestinian linguistic version of the Mishna, chronologically precedes the intermediate reconstructed stage **ʾakkid*, which was most probably the common local (Aramaic?) form of the word by the time of the Arab conquests of the seventh century CE.

Each of the two abovementioned linguistic analyses has different implications for the etymology of עכיד *ʿakkid* ~ כיד *kid*. The first analysis, according to which כיד *kid* is the original word, may bring us to the Hebrew root כי"ד in BH כִּיד *kīḏ* (Job 21.20), which, according to the context, is semantically related to destruction. Another possibly related word is כִּידוֹן *kīḏōn* 'javelin, short sword' (*HALOT*, 472). It is conceivable that these words denoting 'destruction' and 'fighting' are connected to 'pressing', similar to the meanings of the Hebrew root כב"ש 'conquer' ~ 'press'.

A less morphologically probable etymology would be כד"ד, with the expected forms singular כֵּד *kēḏ* and plural כִּדִּים *kiddīm*, which do not correlate with the vocalised MSS. However, several

alternations in this pattern do exist, e.g., זִיר ~ זֵיר ‘thin cane of vegetables and grain’ (Bar-Asher 2015, I:127, 34). Moreover, several RH words deriving from geminate roots appear in this pattern, such as טִיף *ṭīf* ‘drop’. Nonetheless, the attestation of this root in Hebrew suggests no clear answers: the word כַּד *kaḏ* ‘bulbous vessel’ does not seem to fit semantically. The adjective כַּד *kaḏ*, which appears in RH (b. Avoda Zara 40a; b. Ḥullin 64a) to describe the flat side of an egg as opposed to the pointed one, does not seem to be related either.

The roots כד"ד or כי"ד in other Semitic languages seem to be a much better semantic fit. In Classical Arabic the verb *kadda* is attested in the meaning ‘plied, pressed hard; trod ground (with hoofs)’; *ʾarḍ kadīd* ‘ground trodden with the hoofs of horses or the like’. The noun *kadd* is ‘a mortar in which things are pounded or bruised’ (Lane 1863–1893, VII:2594–95). This meaning in Classical Arabic has been connected to *kyd* ‘to tread, to trample, to walk’ in Ethiopian languages (Leslau 1987, 872; Kogan 2015, 461). Nevertheless, these meanings are unattested in Hebrew and Aramaic.

The second analysis, suggesting that עכיד *ʿakkid* is the original form, would imply that the word is derived from עכ"ד. Both Hebrew and Aramaic lack this root, making it even less probable that this is the right etymological direction. The root עכ"ד is attested in Arabic in various meanings, such as *ʿakada ʾilā* ‘he had recourse, betook himself, or repaired, to him for refuge, or protection’, *ʿakad* ‘a middle of a thing’, and *ʿakadat-* ‘the root of the tongue’ (Lane 1863–1893, V:2119). These meanings do not seem

to suit the relevant context, which makes it hard to suggest any etymology for the עכיד *ʿakkid* variant.

Overall, the first analysis of *kid* > **ʾakkid* ~ *ʿakkid* seems to be preferable, albeit not without its problems. The exact etymology of this peculiar RH word still requires a more comprehensive solution.

## 6.0. Conclusion

I have suggested that the original version of MS Kaufmann vocalised הַכִּידוֹן *hak-kīḏōn* (m. Bava Batra 4.5) is הכידים *h-kydym*, denoting 'press weight-stones'. I have argued that the RH כיד *kyd* (*kid*) ~ עכיד *ʿkyd* (*ʿakkid*) is most likely a predecessor of the Palestinian colloquial Arabic substrate word *lakkīd* 'screw weight-stone'. The *l* in the Palestinian Arabic *lakkīd* derives from the Arabic definite article *al-*, as part of a process of reanalysis and back-formation, suggesting an intermediate (Aramaic?) stage with an initial glottal stop: **ʾakkid*. This stage correlates with the Babylonian Talmud original singular form עכיד *ʿkyd* (*ʿakkid*), with an initial *ʿayin*. I have explained this pair of forms as one of numerous examples of *ʾalef-ʿayin* alternation in RH. I have suggested that the short form כיד *kyd* (*kid*) in Mishnaic MSS is possibly a monosyllabic variant extended by addition of prosthetic *ʾalef*, which in turn alternated with *ʿayin* (according to Babylonian Talmud MSS): *kid* > **ʾakkid* ~ *ʿakkid*. Finally, I have suggested several etymological directions, of which כ"ד ~ כ"ד seems to be the most suitable, possibly correlating with Semitic cognates meaning 'press hard, tread, trample, walk over'.

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# THE REALISATION OF *ṢERE* IN CONTEMPORARY HEBREW: MONOPHTHONGAL OR DIPHTHONGAL?*

*Yehudit Henshke*

It has long been recognised that the pronunciation of the Tiberian vowel sign *ṣere* and the distinction (or lack thereof) between it and *segol* is a distinguishing phonological feature of the Ashkenazic and Sephardic Hebrew reading traditions.[1] If from the thirteenth century on, Ashkenazic Jews realised *ṣere* as a diphthong in a number of variations—[ay], [ɛj], [ej]—and *segol* as [e] (Katz 1993, 55), Sephardic Jews realised *ṣere* as a monophthong [e] and made no distinction between it and *segol* (Henshke 2013, 537).[2]

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[1] For convenience, I utilise the graphic designations *ṣere* and *segol.*

[2] This phonological distinction is reflected in *halakha* and Jewish customs. Thus, for example, the question of the pronunciation of the segolate-paroxytone noun זכר in Parashat Zakhor (Deut. 25.17–19), recited

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With the revival of spoken Hebrew in the land of Israel came general adoption of the Sephardic realisation of the vowels by Ashkenazim, who refrained, for various reasons, from realisation of diphthongs (Vaʿad ha-Lashon ha-ʿIvrit be-ʾErets Yiśrael 1928, 28; Téné 1996, 223; Harshav 2008, 183). This was by no means a straightforward process: in 1904, David Yellin recommended that a distinction be made not only between *ṣere* and *segol*, but also between the two types of *ṣere*—long and short (Yellin 1905)—even though the latter distinction is unknown in any pronunciation tradition. Although Yellin did not again raise this latter proposal, he did not retract his proposed distinction between *ṣere* and *segol* (Yellin 1937, 78–79; Ben-Hayyim 1992, 249–50, fn. 14).

The 1913 Language Committee decision in favour of the use of the Sephardic accent (Vaʿad ha-Lashon ha-ʿIvrit be-ʾErets-Yiśrael 1928, 24–49) endorsed the elimination of the distinction both between Tiberian *qameṣ* and *pataḥ* and between *ṣere* and *segol*. Nonetheless, in actuality, realisation of vowels displayed no uniformity. Studies from the early 1950s show that a fair number of speakers of General Israeli Hebrew (GIH)—specifically

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on the Sabbath before Purim, troubled Ashkenazic halakhists. Is it vocalised with *ṣere* [ˈzejxer]/[ˈzajxer], or with segol [ˈzexer]? In the absence of a definitive decision, the word is read twice in Ashkenazic synagogues (*Mishnah Berurah* 682.18). Among Sephardim this question did not arise, as both *ṣere* and *segol* are realised as a simple monophthong [ˈzexer].

those of Ashkenazic extraction—continued to preserve the diphthongal realisation of *ṣere* as [ej] (Weiman 1950, 6), even if not regularly or consistently (Blanc 1964, 137–38; Ornan 1973, 156). The diphthongal realisation is still heard at present (https://hebrew-academy.org.il/2011/05/01/הגיית-הצירי-המלא/).

A completely different phonological picture of GIH emerges from the Hebrew of native Israelis with roots in Islamic countries, presently termed *Mizraḥim*. In the 1980s Yaakov Bentolila noted the conspicuous presence of the monophthong among southern rural youth in his study's target population (Bentolila 1984, 129–37). Elhanan Peleg's study of urban youth in the Tel-Aviv region showed a reduction in the status of the diphthong among Ashkenazim, but identified the monophthongal realisation of *ṣere* [e] as an outstanding feature of Mizraḥi speech (Peleg 1989; 1992).

The question of the realisation of *ṣere* in GIH again arose in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. These studies found that short *ṣere* (written without etymological *yod*) is generally pronounced as a monophthong [e] similar to *segol,* but that long *ṣere* written with *matres lectionis* (especially *yod*) can be realised in GIH as the diphthong [ej] (Rosenhouse 1990; Matras and Schiff 2005, 160–61; Neuman 2013).

At present, in the 2020s, with respect to Mizraḥi Hebrew the monophthongal pronunciation has been preserved and still serves as a definitive marker of its distinctiveness. This distinctiveness serves not only as a basis for sociolinguistic discussion, but also for biting satire.

This article's broad, updated sociolinguistic description of the pronunciation of *ṣere* confirms the perpetuation of the monophthongal picture in Mizraḥi Hebrew as compared to current GIH. Furthermore, I propose here that the rare diphthongs attested in Mizraḥi Hebrew are either based on pronunciation traditions or determined by their linguistic environment. In actuality, the 'diphthongs' found at the end of words are not 'true' diphthongs, but rather an attempt to arrive at so-called consistency in Modern Hebrew pronunciation in this context.

## 1.0. Research Methodology

I addressed this socio-phonological question in the context of a comprehensive study of twenty-first-century Mizraḥi Hebrew.[3] Due to limitations of space, only the main findings are presented here. The data for the study derive from the 'Other Hebrew Corpus', a broad, recorded, and transcribed database of conversations between native Israelis of Mizraḥi origin that contains 1,248,538 tokens. These conversations reflect natural speech and do not contain selections read aloud or responses to preset questionnaires. Drawn from a varied population, the speakers belong to a range of ages (pupils to adults), genders, professions, education, religiosity, specific ethnic backgrounds, places of residence, proximity to Mizraḥi centres, and knowledge of spoken Jewish languages. In general, the aim of this corpus was to create a representative portrait of the native Israeli population in the periphery, primarily the Mizraḥi population.

[3] With support of ISF grant 287/19.

In order to test its realisation in Mizraḥi Hebrew, we examined some 9,500 realisations of *ṣere* as found in conversations including 86 speakers. Segments of 250 words were sampled from the different parts of each conversation, for a total of 750 words per conversation. Unlike other studies, the focus was not on orthography or historical vocalisation (short or long *ṣere*); I sought rather to integrate phonetic, phonological, morphological, and syntactic aspects with the social and demographic variables of the participants in the corpus.

## 2.0. Phonetics

From the start, the elusive nature of the *ṣere* posed a problem. Because the study was grounded in natural, mostly rapid, fluent conversations, vowels and diphthongs could be condensed. Indeed, the realisation of historical *ṣere* in our corpus is not uniform. Nonetheless, we can point to three main realisations: the [e] vowel, an [e] vowel with a very short approximant palatal consonant at its end [e$^{j}$], and a clear diphthong [ej]. Analysis with the Praat software showed the second realisation to be closer to the diphthong than to the short vowel [e]. In essence, we found a continuum of realisations.[4]

[4] In order to broaden and sharpen identification of the diphthong in contemporary spoken Hebrew today, I am undertaking a new field study that focuses on comparative lexical examination of the *ṣere* vowel among Israelis, both Ashkenazic and Sephardic. In this context, using a preset list of words, we compare the distribution, length, and acoustic quality of the diphthong in the two groups.

Statistical analysis of the three types of *ṣere* in the sample according to One Way ANOVA showed significant, even dramatic, differences in the use of the simple vowel by speakers: $F(2,158) = 1745.21^{***}$.[5]

As seen above, notwithstanding the strong social and demographic variety among Mizraḥi speakers, the [e] vowel predominates, and the two diphthongal realisations are less frequent. Moreover, there is no significant difference in the frequency of use of the long and short diphthongs.

Table 1: Means (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for average frequency of the use of *ṣere*[6]

| *ṣere* realisation | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| vowel [e] | 112.08 | 23.39 |
| diphthong [ej] | 1.22 | 1.54 |
| short diphthong [ej] | 1.54 | 2.05 |

We also used statistical tests (t-test, One Way ANOVA, and Spearman and Pearson correlations) to determine links between sociodemographic variables: gender (male and female), age (young to old), generation in Israel (first, second, third), education (elementary, high school, academic), religiosity (secular, traditional, observant), knowledge of Judaeo-Arabic (none, little,

[5] One Way ANOVA (F) tests whether there is a significant difference between the use of the three types of *ṣere* and its realisation in each type. The higher the F value, the greater its significance, eliminating chance.

[6] Means: the average frequency of the use of *ṣere* for each type; SD (standard deviation): the variability between speakers in the frequency of the use of *ṣere*.

medium, fluent) as independent variables, with realisation of *ṣere* as the dependent variable. The results showed a definitively negative link between fluency in Judaeo-Arabic and use of the diphthong. Although the realisation [e] dominates, speakers fluent in Arabic exhibited even less frequent use of the diphthong.

Table 2: Spearman rank correlation coefficient between fluency in Judaeo-Arabic and realisation of *ṣere*[7]

| Variants | [ej] | [e$^{j}$] | [e] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fluency | −.268* | −.202 | −.044 |
| *p < .05 | | | |

This is an important finding that reiterates the link between Mizraḥi traditions and realisation of *ṣere.* It also indicates the influence of another factor on the monophthongal realisation of *ṣere* among Mizraḥi speakers: Judaeo-Arabic. Not only is the diphthong [ej] not pronounced in the Hebrew reading traditions in Islamic countries, Judaeo-Arabic as well does not recognise this diphthong (Harrell 1962, 14). This statistical finding therefore posits Judaeo-Arabic as another possible factor behind the monophthongal realisation of *ṣere* in Mizraḥi Hebrew, alongside their communal reading traditions (of Hebrew).

[7] Spearman rank correlation tests the association between two variables. For example, the more fluent a speaker is in Arabic, the less frequent his use of the diphthong. The correlation is between −1.0 and +1.0. If closer to 0, the correlation is weak. If closer to −1.0 or +1.0, the correlation is stronger. A positive correlation means that if one variable is higher, the second variable is also higher. Conversely, negative correlation means that if one variable is higher, the second variable is lessened.

## 3.0. Phonology

By way of examining its phonological realisations, I present the categories in which *ṣere* was realised in our sample. I would like to stress from the start that, unlike the abovementioned studies, we found no link between *plene* spelling or penultimate stress and diphthongal realisations among our speakers.

## 3.1. Open Syllables

### 3.1.1. Initial Syllable

The [e] vowel is with one exception articulated in word-initial open syllables, whether stressed or unstressed, where the vowel's origins lie in the historical short *ṣere* (121 words in different inflections):

- General words such as: אדע 'I will know', אלה 'these', בסדר 'okay', עצים 'trees'
- Personal names: אהוד 'Ehud', אליהו 'Eliyahu' אתי 'Eti'

Only for one instance of historical short *ṣere*, the numeral תשע 'nine', did we find some realisation of the diphthong alongside the monophthong:[8] [ej] 2x; [e$^{j}$] 3x; [e] 11x.

A similar phenomenon is attested for words with etymological *yod*, i.e., historical long *ṣere* (twenty words): for example, איפה 'where?', ביצה 'egg', בינוני 'intermediate, participle', עיניים 'eyes', שניהם 'both of them, the two of them', תימניה 'Yemenite (FS)', and also for words with proparoxytone stress, e.g., איזשהו

[8] I also mention אלו for which a single diphthongal realisation [ej] was documented as opposed to [e] seven times.

'some (X)'. Of the above instances, alongside the realisation [e], diphthongal realisation was found for only two words:

- איזה 'which': 4x as the diphthong [ej], 1x as a weak diphthong [e$^{j}$], as opposed to 263x with the monophthong [e]
- ביניהם 'between them, among them': 2x as a diphthong (once as [ej] and once as [e$^{j}$]), as opposed to 22x with the monophthong [e]

With respect to historical long *ṣere*, three proper nouns—a town and football team, another town, and a military campaign—displayed mixed realisation alongside exclusively diphthongal realisation:

- ביתר 'Betar': 2x with a weak diphthong [e$^{j}$] and 5x with the monophthong [e]
- חיפה 'Haifa': 2x with the diphthong [ej] and 1x with [e]
- איתן (צוק) '(Tzuk) Eitan': 1x with the diphthong [ej] and 1x with weak [e$^{j}$]

### 3.1.2. Middle of Word

In open syllables in the middle of a word (penultimate syllable) (91 words), historical long *ṣere* was pronounced with the monophthong [e], for example, השתניתי 'I changed', אלינו 'to us', בעיניך 'in your eyes', יפיפיה 'very beautiful', לידינו 'next to us', תפילתנו 'our prayer'. This was also the case for originally short *ṣere*, such as אמנו 'our mother', אצלנו 'at ours', בהמה 'domesticated animal, beast', מטחנה 'food grinder', רוממה 'Romema (neighbourhood)'.

### 3.1.3. Final Syllables

The vowel [e] dominates in open syllables at the end of words (80 words; 83.3 percent), but here we find greater use of the diphthong. This group includes words that end in *heh* and primarily in *ʾalef*, such as, הרבה 'many, much, a lot', הא '(the letter) *heh*', הנה 'look!, here!', מבטא 'pronounces/-ing, expresses/-ing (MS)', מוצא 'finds/-ing (MS)', פא '(the letter) *peh*', קורא 'calls/-ing, reads/-ing (MS)', רופא 'doctor'.

Note, however, that a significant portion of these words (47) appear in construct forms (mainly in the middle, but also at the end of an utterance), such as -בתי 'houses of', -דברי 'words of', -לימודי 'studies of', -משחקי 'games of', -פרקי 'chapters of', -שני 'two (M)', -שתי 'two (F)'. Only for sixteen forms (which comprise 17.5 percent of the words with this status), most of which are in plural construct state, with the minority the names of the letters *heh* and *peh,* was the diphthong attested.

## 3.2. Closed Syllables

### 3.2.1. Single-syllable Words

The same was true for single-syllable words (28 words), regardless of whether the source of the *ṣere* preserved etymological *yod* (long *ṣere*) or historical [i]. For example:

- Historical long *ṣere:* איך 'how?' (and איכשהו 'somehow'), אין '(there is/are) not', בין 'between, among', -בית 'house of', ליל 'eve, evening (of)', עין 'eye of', ריש '(the letter) *resh*', שתים-עשרה 'twelve'

- Short *ṣere:* אש ‘fire’, בן ‘son’, כן ‘yes, thus’, לב ‘heart’, מם ‘(the letter) *mem*’, שש ‘six’, תן ‘give! (MS)’.

### 3.2.2. Final Syllable

In 485 words that ended with closed syllables, *ṣere* was consistently pronounced [e]. This group also includes words with historical long *ṣere* preserving etymological *yod*, e.g., נכווית ‘is (being) burned, disappointed, hurt (FS), נראית ‘appears, seems (FS)’, and proper names, such as ישראל ‘Israel’, יחיאל ‘Yeḥiʾel’, ירדן ‘Jordan’, עדיאל ‘ʿAdiʿel’, and שמואל ‘Samuel’. This realisation is naturally frequent in names and verbs with no special features that end with *ṣere*, the majority of occurrences.

Only two realisations of the diphthong were found, both in words that end with furtive *pataḥ*. My conclusion was that in closed syllables, Mizraḥi speakers consistently realise *ṣere* as a monophthong [e].

To summarise up to this point: in Mizraḥi Hebrew *ṣere* is almost always realised with the vowel [e], irrespective of its historical source, spelling, stress, or placement in a sentence. Nor is its realisation dependent on education, gender, religiosity, occupation, place of residence, or the speakers’ distant ethnic origins.

We now return to the irregularities in the predominantly monophthongal picture described above. Despite their limited number and lack of statistical significance, the cases of realisation of the diphthong shed light on the phonology of spoken Hebrew and on its relationship with classical Hebrew traditions. Below I present all the words for which diphthongal realisations are attested.

## 4.0. Lexicon

### 4.1. Loanwords

As expected, the outstanding group in which we find realisation of *ṣere* as a diphthong is that of loanwords, which are alien to the Hebrew pronunciation and grammatical systems. The preservation of the diphthong in these environments can be attributed to preservation of the form of the original word, especially given the close acquaintance of contemporary Israeli natives with English. Nonetheless, there are instances in which the pronunciation of the words is adjusted to the speakers' phonological system, which lacks the diphthong [ej]. The following table lists the words in which the diphthong was attested.

Table 3: Loanwords

| | [ej] | [e$^{j}$] | [e] |
|---|---|---|---|
| אוקיי | 20 | 2 | 7 |
| פייסבוק | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| מייל | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| דיג'יי | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| פליליסט | 1 | 0 | 0 |

First place is occupied by the word אוקיי 'okay', which is a longstanding word in Hebrew; although it has twenty occurrences with a diphthong, there are seven monophthongal occurrences. It is followed by the relatively new word פייסבוק 'Facebook', which came into use at a time when English became more widespread in Israel; here we have seven diphthongal realisations as opposed to two monophthongal ones. The word מייל 'email', on the other hand, is realised with all three pronunciations. דיג'יי

'deejay', פליי 'play (button)', and פלייליסט 'playlist' occurred more rarely and were realised with the diphthong.

## 4.2. Fixed Context

A second group consists of words that appear in fixed contexts. Its members include place and personal names, along with frozen expressions in which *ṣere* can also be realised as a diphthong. Note that, as mentioned earlier, in all of these instances, *ṣere* appears in an open syllable in the middle or at the end of the word. Thus, the איתן (צוק) '(Tzuk) Eitan (campaign)' was pronounced with the diphthong in the media and, like that of חיפה 'Haifa', its pronunciation became fixed.

Here I also include the letters הא '*heh*' and פא '*peh*' and the numeral תשע 'nine', which belong to school language and whose pronunciation adheres to that acquired there.[9] For the first two words, the diphthongal realisation dominates (87.5 percent): הא was realised as [hej] three times and as [he$^{j}$] once; פא was realised as [pej] twice, as [pe$^{j}$] once, and as [pe] once. However, the realisations of תשע attest the widespread realisation of the simple vowel [e] (68.75 percent), found eleven times, as opposed to [e$^{j}$] three times, and [ej] twice. There is a higher realisation of the monophthong (80 percent) in the Aramaic expressions וכולי 'etc.',

[9] The first teachers and educators in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as master teachers in the following decades, had Ashkenazic backgrounds and were speakers of GIH. Their influence on the periphery was substantial and continues to be discernible to the present in the educational sphere.

with [e] six times and [ej] once, and מילא ‘oh well, so what, such is life’, with [e] twice, [ej] once.

This trend toward diphthongal realisation of words in fixed contexts and in personal names is also attested in GIH. The diphthong is consistently realised in the place names חיפה ‘Haifa’ and גיא בן הינום ‘Valley of Ben Hinnom’, in the Aramaic expression וכולי ‘etc.’ (Rosenhouse 1990, 130), and in the words הא ‘*heh*’, פא ‘*peh*’, and תשע ‘nine’ (Neuman 2013, 247–48). Thus, the preservation of the diphthongal pronunciation in proper nouns and fixed contexts in GIH has penetrated Mizraḥi Hebrew.

## 5.0. Phonology: Furtive *pataḥ*

An unexceptional group, but one with historic roots, encompasses the words that end with a glide due to furtive *pataḥ*, previously mentioned in the discussion of word-final closed syllables. Our sample corpus contains 32 words ending in a glide before one of the guttural consonants (*ḥet*, *ʿayin*, *heh*). Most were pronounced [e] followed by [a], such as ריח [ˈreaḥ] ‘scent’ written *plene*, and בורח ‘flees/-ing (MS)’, גובה ‘gets/-ting taller (MS)’, יודע ‘knows (MS)’, שומע ‘hears/-ing (MS), תוקע ‘thrusts/-ing, sticks-/ing (MS)’. Only in two instances did we hear an approximant palatal consonant *yod* before the glide: תופח [toˈfejaḥ] ‘swollen’, אורח [oˈrejax] ‘guest’. The latter two realisations were produced by non-native Israelis, from Iraq and from Morocco, whose mother tongue was Judaeo-Arabic. This phenomenon of a break in the continuity of vowels (furtive *pataḥ*) before gutturals at the end of a word is not new, nor is it unique to Contemporary He-

brew; rather, it is attested in Mishnaic manuscripts. Thus, for example, תוֹקֵיַע ‘blow/-ing (the shofar) (MS)’ (m. Rosh Hash. 4.5) in MS Kaufmann of the Mishna; מַקְדֵיַח ‘drill’ (m. ʾOhal. 13.1) in MS Parma B. The *yod* is clearly vocalised in both manuscripts (Bar-Asher 2009, I:138–39).

This realisation was also common in the reading traditions of different communities, sometimes with gemination:

- יודע [joˈdejaˤ] ‘knows (MS)’ (m. Beṣa 3.2, Aleppo) (K. Katz 1981, 51)
- מניח [manˈnijʲaḥ] ‘sets/-ting (MS)’ (m. Peʾa 5.6, Baghdad) (Morag 1977)
- שומע [šoˈmejjaˤ] ‘hears/-ing (MS)’ (m. Ber. 2.5, Jerba) (Ktzia Katz 1977, 87; Maman 1984, 89–90)
- קורע [koˈrejaˤ] ‘tears/-ing (MS)’ (m. Shab. 13.2, Tetouan (Maman 1984, 89–90)

Because the realisations אורח and תופח were attested only in the speech of first-generation immigrants, it seems likely that they should be attributed to the ethnic traditions with which they were familiar, and not to the influence of GIH, whose roots are Ashkenazic.

## 6.0. Morphology and Syntax

Apart from the phonological categories considered to this point, in which the diphthongal realisation is on the lexical plane, a fairly prominent phenomenon emerged in our corpus: the diphthongal realisation of *ṣere* in word-final open syllables, in construct state plurals, and in function words and quantifiers.

## 6.1. Plural Construct State

In GIH, in the plural construct state, *ṣere* is usually realised diphthongally, as in ערי ‘cities of’, מפרצי ‘gulfs of, bays of’ (Rosenhouse 1990, 130); here we find a strong distinction in Mizraḥi Hebrew. First, I present the occurrences for which the diphthong was attested, as mentioned above:

Table 4: Diphthongal Realisations in Plural Construct State

| | nomen rectum | [ej] | [e$^{j}$] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ילידי- ‘natives of’ | 2 | 0 |
| 2 | קשיי יום ‘difficulties of the day’ | 1 | 0 |
| 3 | שני- ‘two (M)’ | 1 | 0 |
| 4 | טעמי מקרא ‘biblical accents’ | 1 | 2 |
| 5 | קשרי מסחר ‘commercial connections’ | 1 | 0 |
| 6 | גריסי חיטה ‘wheat grits’ | 1 | 0 |
| 7 | כינויי גנאי ‘derogatory name’; כינויי חיבה ‘pet name’ | 0 | 2 |
| 8 | מטעמי המימונה ‘because of the Mimouna (feast)’ | 1 | 0 |
| 9 | סוגי- ‘types of’ | 1 | 0 |
| 10 | פלפולי שפה ‘casuistry’ | 1 | 0 |
| 11 | ריקודי (ה)בטן ‘belly dances’ | 3 | 0 |
| 12 | שירי- ‘songs of’ | 2 | 0 |

Above I noted that the majority of the forms in the plural construct state in our sample were realised with a simple vowel and only a minority with a diphthong. Moreover, this lack of realisation has no discernible lexical motivation. The same words are realised at times with a diphthong, at others without. Thus, the numeral שני- (no. 3) was generally realised with [e]. Further reducing the diphthongal realisation are those construct-state forms in which the *nomen regens* begins with approximant palatal *yod*, such as ילידי ישראל ‘native Israelis’, קשיי יום ‘difficulties of the day’, and שני ילדים ‘two children’ (nos 1–3), or with the sonorant

consonant *mem*, such as ילידי מרוקו ‘native Moroccans’, קשרי מסחר ‘commercial connections’, טעמי מקרא ‘biblical accents’ (nos 1, 4–5). In these phrases, it is difficult to use Praat to distinguish the diphthong, as the *nomen rectum* could end with a simple vowel and the *yod* or the *mem* at the beginning of the next word create a mistaken impression of diphthongal realisation.

## 6.2. Function Words and Quantifiers

Another group of words with *ṣere* in word-final open syllables that have received scant attention in the scholarship are function words and quantifiers that end with the letter *yod*. Here, too, the diphthongal realisations in our sample are few as compared to the monophthongal ones; nonetheless, they are found more frequently in the plural construct state. Below I provide the data for realisation of the diphthong. I have excluded the word הרבה ‘many, much a lot’, which occurs 211 times in the corpus—210 with [e] and once with [ej]—because of the single appearance of the diphthongal pronunciation among the Mizraḥi speakers taking part in the sample.

Table 5: Function words, adverbs, and quantifiers

| | Function words, adverbs, and quantifiers | [ej] | [e$^{j}$] | [e] | Total occurrences |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | די ‘rather, quite’ | 6 | 3 | 2 | 11 |
| 2 | כדי ‘in order’ | 6 | 9 | 21 | 36 |
| 3 | אחרי ‘after, behind’ | 4 | 5 | 51 | 60 |
| 4 | לפני ‘before, in front of’ | 3 | 7 | 50 | 60 |
| 5 | הרי ‘indeed, therefore’ | 1 | 2 | 12 | 15 |
| 6 | לגבי ‘concerning’ | 0 | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | לידי ‘to’ | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 |

The two leading words in this category are די (no. 1), mentioned in Rosenhouse's (1990, 130) study of GIH, and כדי (no. 2), which was not mentioned. For די most of the occurrences in our sample were diphthongal, and the minority monophthongal; but for the remaining words the monophthongal realisation dominated. Nonetheless, the diphthongal realisations are not exclusive; thus, for example, לפני or אחרי (nos 3–4), which are realised monophthongally 50–51 times, have 9–10 diphthongal realisations.

To sum up to this point, the majority of the diphthongal realisations of *ṣere* in Mizraḥi Hebrew occur in word-final open syllables, in the middle or at end of an utterance.

This raises the question of why the diphthongal realisations appear in Mizraḥi Hebrew at the end of words in particular. As described above, in word-initial and word-medial open syllables the diphthong is virtually non-existent in our sample. But in GIH the situation differs: *ṣere* with etymological *yod* is almost always realised diphthongally; for example, איזה 'which? (MS)', איפה 'where?', בינוני 'intermediate, participle', ביצה 'egg', זיתים 'olives', מידע 'information', מיטב 'best', and צידה 'provisions', among others (Rosenhouse 1990, 130; Neuman 2013; https://hebrew-academy.org.il/2011/05/01/הגיית-הצירי-המלא/). In Mizraḥi Hebrew, on the other hand, the diphthong is scarcely realised, with the exception of the aforementioned words איזה 'which? (MS)' and ביניהם 'between them, among them'.

What, then, accounts for the divergence from Mizraḥi consistency in open syllables at the end, but not in the middle, of words? One scholar ascribes it to a phonemic distinction between

singular and plural construct forms, such as קנה מידה ‘scale’ and קני מידה ‘scales’ (Laufer 2008, 211). Others cite the influence of *plene* spelling (Rosenhouse 1990; Neuman 2013), even though our sample showed no link between orthography and the diphthongal realisations as seen from the realisation of *ṣere* in the middle of the word, such as איפה [ˈefo] ‘where?’, ביצה [beˈtsa] ‘egg’, and בעיניך [beˤeˈneχa] ‘in your (MS) eyes’, among others. The same is true of the different explanations applied to the diphthongal realisation of the letters הא ‘*heh*’ and פא ‘*peh*’ (Neuman 2013, 148); after all, the letters בית ‘*bet*’ and ריש ‘*resh*’ have identical lexical and sociolinguistic status, but are not pronounced diphthongally.

I seek, however, not a local, but rather a more comprehensive explanation for this phenomenon, as exemplified in word-final open syllables. It appears that a phonological explanation is called for. The initial syllable of words displays stability (Steriade 1994); this accounts for the preservation of the monophthongal realisation of *ṣere* by Mizraḥi Hebrew speakers at the beginning of words such as ביצה [beˈtsa] ‘egg’ and עינים [ˤeˈnaim] ‘eyes’, and in most occurrences of איזה [ˈeze] ‘which?’, declined בין ‘between, among’, e.g., ביניהם [beneˈhem] ‘between them, among them’, and תשע [ˈtešaˤ] ‘nine’. But the case for the final syllable differs.

The realisation [ej] in Mizraḥi Hebrew occurs particularly in final open syllables. This perhaps represents a tendency to close open syllables at the end of words, especially in frequent, short words. The majority of words in Contemporary Hebrew end with closed syllables: more than 63.1 percent of words end with a closed syllable (CVC) compared to less than 29.7 percent with

open syllables (CV) (Asherov and Bat El 2019). Perhaps the relatively low number of final open syllables invites Mizraḥi speakers to arrive at so-called consistency in the system and to close the syllable with the semivowel [j].[10]

If my proposed explanation is tenable, it leads to another important phonological insight connected with the Israeli-Mizraḥi sociolect. This pertains to the question of the nature of the diphthongal *ṣere* in this sociolect: is it perceived by its speakers as a single phonological unit—a diphthong—or is it perhaps a combination of the [e] vowel and the closely related semi-vowel [j]? I contend, as proposed above, that Mizraḥi Hebrew speakers tend to close final open syllables in specific categories: thus, this is not a diphthongal 'Ashkenazi' realisation, but rather the closing of an open final syllable with [j].[11]

## 7.0. Conclusion

Mizraḥi Hebrew speakers do not realise *ṣere* as a diphthong. The realisation of the [e] vowel + a close palatal consonant [j] is attested in their speech in words borrowed from foreign languages, in frozen expressions 'borrowed' from GIH, and at the

[10] I am not aware of instances where final open syllables are closed with other vowels. I assume that the inclination to close final syllables in this context may be facilitated by the variant realisation in GIH. Nevertheless, this phenomenon warrants more extensive research.

[11] The proposal that GIH does not possess the diphthong [ej] was raised by Laufer (2008, 211) and by Asherov and Bat El (2019, 87) based on different considerations.

end of words. I propose that the realisation [ej] be regarded as a strategy for closing a final open syllable.

When I embarked on my examination of *ṣere* in Mizraḥi Hebrew, I assumed that the pronunciation of *ṣere* in Mizraḥi speech would not represent a consistent tradition like that among the first-generation immigrants to Israel, who acquired their communal Hebrew traditions in the Diaspora. I expected to find a spectrum between two poles among second- and third-generation Mizraḥi Hebrew speakers: unique Mizraḥi features as opposed to GIH features. But a different picture emerged. With regard to *ṣere*, Mizraḥi Hebrew tends to preserve its underlying tradition. As opposed to the rapid decline of emphatic consonants (*qof*, *tet*, *ṣadi*) and distancing from the guttural consonants (*ʿayin*, *ḥet*), the realisation of *ṣere* was largely preserved.

Perhaps this can be attributed to the blurred borders—official standard and so-called sociolinguistic standard—of this phonological vocalic difference. On the one hand, the official decision by the Language Committee has not been changed by its successor, the Academy of the Hebrew Language (see §1.0, above). It calls for realisation of *ṣere* as the monophthong [e], a realisation that is in line with the Hebrew reading traditions of Jews from Islamic countries and their descendants in Israel. On the other hand, in actuality, significant enclaves in which *ṣere* is realised diphthongally still remain in spoken Hebrew and have become a sociolinguistic criterion. In addition, quite a number of speakers maintain that this is the proper way to speak. This lack

of clarity seems to underlie the retention of the traditional Mizraḥi *ṣere* and the difficulty in automatically imitating and adopting the GIH realisations.

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# THE BIBLE AND MODERN HEBREW

*Yaron Peleg*

The Hebrew Bible has played a major role in the formation of modern Jewish culture, particularly modern Hebrew literature, and was instrumental for promoting the early visions of the Jewish Enlightenment or *Haskala*. But while the ideas of *Haskala* were spread among Jewish readers in the Hebrew of the Bible, no one expected those readers to pick up Hebrew and start using it every day. It was only after the rise of Zionism that Hebrew sprang to spoken life and became a vernacular again. The Hebrew Bible was central for both developments—for articulating a proto-national Jewishness and for reviving spoken Hebrew—and this short essay looks at some of the different roles it played in this history and the changing influence it had on the perception of the Hebrew language as part of it—from a cultural conceit during the *Haskala* to a cultural imperative under Zionism.

Because much of this history is known, I note only briefly the instrumental use of Biblical Hebrew (BH) by many *maskilim*, especially those who were reluctant to use Yiddish, the language of their diaspora and subjugation, and who hoped that BH would remind Jews and non-Jews of the majesty of ancient Israel and the grace of its old language (Seidman 1997). When Hebrew writers referred to the biblical kingdoms of Judah and Israel, it was

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not in service of a political programme for the restoration of Jewish independence. Not yet. That would come later with Zionism. BH was a sentimental device that gave Jews a greater sense of worth.

In 1853, Abraham Mapu (1808–1867) captured these sentiments in his runaway bestselling historical novel, *The Love of Zion* (אהבת ציון), a love story set in biblical times and written in BH throughout. Now, historical novels are always about the present, not the past, and so the love story and the political context in which it is set provide important clues to the novel's agenda. The pastoral romance teaches about personal fulfilment through love; the religious reforms of king Josiah resonate with the reformative programme of the *Haskala*. Mapu worked on the novel for nearly twenty years and used a literary technique called *shibuts* in Hebrew, which roughly translates as 'mosaic'. He collected words, phrases, and names from the Hebrew Bible and rearranged them to create an entirely new text, a secular work of art that used a sacred language.

Because Mapu limited himself strictly to the language of the Hebrew Bible and cherry-picked dramatic elements from well-known stories, readers of the novel get an uncanny impression that they are reading the Holy Book. Here is the opening to the novel, which draws on the book of Job, on the book of Kings, on patriarchal stories, and on the story of the prophet Samuel:

> איש היה בירושלים בימי אָחָז מלך יהודה ושמו יוֹרָם בן אֶבְיעֶזֶר, אלוף ביהודה ושר אלף, ויהי לו שדות וכרמים בכרמל ובשרון ועדרי צאן ובקר בבית לחם יהודה; ויהי לו כסף וזהב, היכלי שן וכל שכיות החמדה, ושתי נשים היו לו, שם האחת חַגִּית בת עֵירָא, ושם השנית נַעֲמָה. ויאהב יורם את נעמה מאד, כי יפת תואר היא. ותקנא בה חגית צרתה ותכעיסנה, כי לחגית היו שני בנים ולנעמה לא היה ולד.

> In the days of Ahaz, king of Judah, there was a man in Jerusalem named Yoram ben Aviezer, a chieftain in Judah and captain of a thousand. He had fields and vineyards in Carmel and Sharon as well as sheep and cattle in Bethlehem of Judah. He also had silver and gold, ivory palaces, and lovely crafts. And he had two wives, one named Hagit daughter of Ira, the other named Naʿama. Yoram loved Naʿama very much, for she was beautiful. Hagit, her rival, was envious of her and tormented her, for she had two sons and Naʿama had no child.

Table 1. Biblical references in *The Love of Zion* (non-biblical material in brackets)

איש היה בירושלים 'There was a man (in Jerusalem)' (Job 1.1)
בימי אָחָז מלך יהודה 'in the days of Ahaz king of Judah' (Isa. 7.1)
ושמו יוֹרָם '(and his name was) Yoram' (2 Sam. 10.8)
בן אֲבִיעֶזֶר '(son of) Aviezer' (Josh. 17.2)
אלוף ביהודה 'chieftain (in Judah)' (Gen. 36.15)
ושר אלף 'and a captain of a thousand' (1 Sam. 18.13)
ויהי לו 'And he had' (Gen. 12.17)
שדות וכרמים 'fields and vineyards' (1 Sam. 22.7)
בכרמל 'in Carmel' (Josh. 18.26)
ובשרון 'and in Sharon' (1 Chron. 27.29)
ועדרי צאן ובקר '(and flocks of) sheep and cattle' (Gen. 12.16)
בבית לחם יהודה 'in Bethlehem of Judah' (Judg. 17.7)
ויהי לו כסף וזהב '(and he had) silver and gold' (Gen. 24.35)
היכלי שן 'ivory palaces' (Ps. 45.9)
שכיות החמדה 'lovely crafts' (Isa. 2.16)
ושתי נשים היו לו 'And he had two wives' (1 Sam. 1.2)
שם האחת 'The name of the one (was)' (Gen. 4.19)
חַגִּית 'Hagit' (1 Sam. 3.4)
בת עִירָא '(daughter of) Ira' (2 Sam. 20.26)
ושם השנית 'and the name of the other (was)' (Gen. 4.19)
נַעֲמָה 'Naʿama' (Gen. 4.22)
ויאהב יורם את נעמה מאד 'And Yoram (greatly) loved (Naʿama)' (Gen. 29.18)
כי יפת תואר היא '(for she was) beautiful' (Gen. 29.17)
ותקנא בה חגית 'And (Hagit) was envious of' (Gen. 30.1)
צרתה 'her rival' (1 Sam. 1.6)
ותכעיסנה 'and tormented her' (1 Sam. 1.7)
כי לחגית היו שני בנים ולנעמה לא היה ולד 'for (Hagit had) two sons while (Naʿama) had no child. (Gen. 11.30)

A few decades later, in response to the limited emancipation the *Haskala* offered, Hebrew writers began giving their Hebrew a more political turn, as in Mordechai Zeev Feierberg's novella, *Whither?* (לאן?), which ends with this vision: "I do believe," says the protagonist, "that if the Jewish people truly have a purpose, [they should live up to it] by going to the East," to the Land of Israel, "not as an enemy of the East, but as its loving brother." It will not be easy, he warns his listeners, but there is no doubt it shall come about. "I see it, though not now, I behold it, yet it is not near," he quotes the prophet Balaam (Num. 24.17), and ends his own prophecy with the call, "To the East! To the East! (מזרחה *mizraḥa*)." Feierberg (1874–1899) wrote those words at about the same time Zionism appeared on the world stage. It was not a coincidence, except that Feierberg and other Hebrew writers focused on culture, not on diplomacy, and hoped that language would bring those changes about. They were sorely disappointed. Most Jews were occupied with the ordinary stuff of an increasingly secular life and had little time or use for Hebrew. Many emigrated overseas in search of a better life, and those who remained in Europe still believed in integration. Hebrew became increasingly useless for both groups.

Zionism was a game-changer and it turned the fate of Hebrew around. If the *maskilim* were the first to imagine Hebrew in a secular context, Zionists gave that context a political meaning. With the establishment of the *Yishuv*, the modern Jewish community in Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century, Hebrew almost immediately became its transcendent expression. From that moment on, the Modern Hebrew library that had been

written outside of Palestine throughout the previous century became the linguistic and imaginative soil on which the Hebrew of the *Yishuv* grew and developed.

But although the Bible continued to be a source of inspiration during the heady days of the *Yishuv*, the focus of its Zionist readers shifted from its language to the Book's narrative content. If the *maskilim* had relied on the ancient register of Hebrew to invoke the glories of their past, Zionists hoped to create an equally glorious future. It was a momentous change that transformed the Hebrew language from an agent of change during the Jewish Enlightenment to something in line with the more usual way we think of language, as an expression of culture.[1] Put another way, if the Hebrew of the *Haskala* had been a conduit between Jewish tradition and Jewish modernity, Hebrew in the *Yishuv* became a more organic part of life. And if the Bible had always informed it, it was now more the content of the book than its language—the stories it told, the heroes it described, and the places it mentioned, rather than the Hebrew in which they were told (Shapira 2006).

It was a logical shift. Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Mount Carmel, and the Plain of Sharon were but metaphors for Mapu in *The Love of Zion*, memories of an ancient pedigree. This is why the kind of Hebrew he used was so important. The language itself was the message. But when Hebrew spilled from book to street in Palestine, it lost its ancient grandeur and became the "staff of life," as Bialik once wrote ('Revealment and Concealment in Language').

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[1] The philosophical question of language as reflecting or creating reality bears on this point, of course.

The men and women of the Yishuv, the 'New Hebrews', as they called themselves, were interested in the Jewish political craftsmanship of their biblical ancestors—especially the work of men and women of war, generals like Joab and courageous women like Jael. They were looking for actual role models, not allegories. "The Bible," wrote educator Ben-Tzion Mossinsohn in 1920, "needs to provide our children with a complete picture of our nation's life in its own land and raise in the hearts of little Hebrews a passion for life and for renewing our national history" (in Shahar 2021, 51). Moreover, he added, when studying the historical (*sic*) parts of the Bible, a geographic map of the Land of Israel should be displayed in class, for it would bring the stories to life and help link people and land in the minds of pupils (Shahar 2021, 53).

Biblical geography was immensely popular in the *Yishuv*. Zionists went on hikes to places like Anathoth, Tekoa, the Judaean Desert, and Mount Ephraim. They also gave the pastime a name, ידיעת הארץ, which roughly translates as 'Know Your Land'. Treks to biblical sites, real or imagined, became integral to Zionist education, extracurricular musts that functioned as an act of husbandry. Traversing the land on foot with Bible in hand acquainted New Hebrews with their *Altneuland*, encouraging them to trace their ancient past on it and take mental possession of it.

> Since the Land of Israel is full of the relics of its rich past, moving through its space becomes a movement through history. Every village, every mountain, every fortress and river remind students of their people's awesome past, of which they heard their teachers tell them. (Shahar 2021, 211)

The vogue of biblical archaeology from the 1950s onward was a more scientific expression of this trend (Finkelstein and Mazar 2007). Archaeologists like Yigael Yadin, who dedicated his academic career to verifying ancient Jewish history, dug up the breadth and width of Israel in search of hard evidence for the nation's roots. And if he was not always successful, it did not diminish his celebrity status, which underscored the cultural importance of the Bible for the young and officially secular Jewish state. Again, the Bible was not used as a dictionary for Israel's Hebrew vernacular. It was seen more as an historical deed to the country, a document that proved Jewish belonging to the land and ownership of it. On 27 November 1957, a short notice on page 2 of the daily *Haboker*, announced that "The remains of a very ancient city from the time of the Patriarchs, probably dating to the 18th century BCE, were found under an ancient Canaanite city in Hazor, which was destroyed by Joshua during the conquest of the Land." The note leaves no doubt as to the historical veracity of either the Patriarchs or Joshua.

With the passage of time and the development of Israel, the need to prove its political legitimacy and its ties to the land diminished as well. The success and prosperity of the state spoke for themselves, without the need to use the Bible as justification. It was especially so regarding military matters, which, in hindsight, seem like a self-fulfilling prophecy. As my Bible teacher once told us—it was in the 1970s—the succession of Israel's military victories in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973 were "biblical" in nature, so unlikely and miraculous, she said, that they could easily have fit into the books of Judges, Samuel, or Kings.

And when realpolitik replaced cultural politics, the relevance of the Bible and its Hebrew shifted once again, this time from history and politics to a more personal reading of the book's wisdom, as in this poem by Natan Zach (1930–2020):

| | |
|---|---|
| *Man's days are like grass.* | אֱנוֹשׁ כֶּחָצִיר יָמָיו. |
| *His days are like grass.* | יָמָיו כֶּחָצִיר. |
| *The days of man are like grass* | יְמֵי אֱנוֹשׁ כֶּחָצִיר |
| *his days.* | יָמָיו. |
| *Do not fear.* | אַל תִּירָא. |
| *Man is to wretchedness born* | אָדָם לְעָמָל יוּלָּד |
| *born to wretchedness.* | יוּלָּד לְעָמָל. |
| *Man is born to wretchedness* | אָדָם יוּלָּד לְעָמָל |
| *born.* | יוּלָּד. |
| *Do not fear.* | אַל תִּירָא. |
| *As sparks fly upward.* | וּבְנֵי רֶשֶׁף יַגְבִּיהוּ עוּף. |
| *Upward sparks fly.* | יַגְבִּיהוּ בְּנֵי רֶשֶׁף. |
| *As sparks fly upward* | וּבְנֵי רֶשֶׁף יַגְבִּיהוּ עוּף |
| *fly upward.* | יַגְבִּיהוּ. |
| *Do not fear.* | אַל תִּירָא. |

Quoting from Psalms and from Job, Zach bypasses the original piety of the teachings and reads their wisdom more personally in the spirit of 1960s western counterculture. Beginning each stanza with an original quote from the Bible, the lines that follow break up the quotes, change the word order, and repeat them in ways that deconstruct their original meaning. As a result, the brevity and wretchedness of existence become simple facts of life, well-known and unhallowed. Moreover, the fourth lines of the first

and second stanzas each contain one word only, יָמָיו 'his days' and יוּלָד '(he) is born', respectively, emphasising the centrality of man over God. The single word יַגְבִּיהוּ '(they) will fly upward', in the fourth line of the last stanza, stresses that centrality by speaking of the heights or distances humans can attain even in their short lifespan, by their own effort. Finally, the common biblical phrase אַל תִּירָא 'fear not' that ends each stanza is used here not as a biblical promise of God's protection and reward to the faithful, but as a simple encouragement to believe in oneself.

Zach is just one example of the widespread poetic use of the Bible in Modern Hebrew literature (Shaked 2005). Meir Shalev is another writer who gave biblical stories a clever contemporary twist in his works. It made him very popular at the turn of the last millennium, although time is slowly changing that dynamic, too. Most of Shalev's readers were relatively old Israelis, who had grown up in the middle of the twentieth century, during the heyday of Israeli biblicism. Their children find the Bible less appealing, and their grandchildren read it with increasing difficulty.

There are some exceptions to this, like national religious Israelis, or settlers, who read the mythological geography of the ancient Land of Israel quite literally. But otherwise, the Bible in Israel has been overshadowed, like poetry and literature more generally, by social media and by the Internet; and this is not unique to Israel, of course. The change has also influenced the relevance of the Bible, certainly for secular Israelis. But in yet another reversal, it has made the Hebrew of the Book important once again, this time as a timeless linguistic standard and another

manifestation of the Zionist yearning for normalcy. The Bible today functions like a Hebrew Shakespeare, or more aptly, like a Hebrew Qurʾān, a standard against which language is constantly measured. The Hebrew Bible does not shape the spoken language of Israel anymore, except as a hallowed model, a measure of eloquence that continues to enrich the language and keeps it connected to its ancient roots.

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# B. COMPARATIVE SEMITICS AND THE SEMITIC LANGUAGES

# ALPHABETICAL ORDER AND ALPHABETICAL THINKING IN THE EAST AND WEST: FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE MIDDLE AGES*

*Aaron J. Koller*

The history of an idea as simple as alphabetical order can be maddeningly difficult to write. The burden of the present paper is not to write that history, but to contribute towards its historiography. Eurocentric discussions of the history of alphabetisation have seen a blank slate in the millennium between Antiquity and the Western Europe of the thirteenth century. This silence is the result of ignoring relevant developments in the eastern Mediterranean and Near East, and later, as the Islamicate world, including North Africa and Muslim Spain.[1]

* It is an honour to dedicate this article to Prof. Geoffrey Khan, whose own work ranges across language and centuries in a way that reminds me like few others of my own shortcomings and limitations. Still, I hope that he accepts this modest contribution to a trivial historical problem with his typical grace and generosity. I am indebted to Joshua Dachman for comments and suggestions that improved this paper.

[1] This is the impression given by Daly (1967), who may be partially excused on the grounds that his is explicitly not a full history. However, he writes, "the refinement of alphabetic order may well be considered

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The idea that alphabetical order was unused during the first millennium is *prima facie* unlikely. The conceptual prerequisites for alphabetisation are simple, and were present already in Antiquity, and even earlier. Assuming the use of an alphabet, there first needs to be an *order* to the alphabet, and second, users of the alphabet have to think of the alphabet metalinguistically—not only as a graphic method of conveying sounds, but as something that can stand outside of language, as well.[2] There is ample evidence from the ancient world that both of these conditions were met.

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as something of a lost art" between the second century and the eleventh (72). Daly's work misled others even more egregiously; a particularly ill-informed victim is Flanders (2020), who writes that "Aristotle, who had been dead for more than a millennium, was ultimately to do more for alphabetical order than any living person in the Middle Ages" (42). One earlier reviewer of Daly's book also missed the need for a more expansive picture: "His work must needs (*sic*) be supplemented by the findings of specialists in several other fields: English, Germanics, Romance languages, Slavic, Celtic, to mention a few" (Kuhn 1972, 300–1). Missing from this list are the fields that deal with anything to the south or east of Christian Europe.

[2] Americans of a certain age may recall a Sesame Street skit that focuses on this ambiguity. When Big Bird sees a sign that says ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPRSTUVWXYZ, he reads it phonetically, /æbkədɛfgi:dʒɛkəlmɪnɒpkwɜrstu:vwɪksɪz/, not realising that these graphemes were intended metalinguistically. Susan explains: "That's not a word… this is the alphabet!" (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTvhKZHAP8U).

## 1.0. Alphabetical Order

Evidence for alphabetical order—indeed, two different alphabetical orders—comes from abecedaries[3] in Israel, Ugarit, and South Arabia, for instance, and from alphabetic acrostics in biblical and later literature.[4] Indirect evidence for the *ʾalef–bet–gimel* order arrives from borrowed alphabets. Both the Ugaritians and the Greeks added letters to the alphabet when they borrowed it; the location of these additional signs at the end of the alphabets indicates that the order of the first 27 letters was inherited from elsewhere (for the Greek data, see Jeffery 1961). There are also Iron Age practices such as the *ʾatbaš* cipher, which pairs the first letter of the alphabet with the last letter, the second with the penultimate, and so on (perhaps already in the twelfth-century BCE Izbet Ṣartah ostracon, Demsky 1977, 19–20). Significantly,

[3] For discussions, see Berlin (1985); Freedman (1986); First (2014). See also the discussions of Hallo (1996, 35–41; 2004); and especially the structure discerned by Demsky (2015). Furthermore, cuneiform lists of the alphabetic letters, from the second and first millennia BCE, show the familiar *ʾalef–bet–gimel* order (Cross and Lambdin 1960; Geller 1997–2000; Cross and Huehnergard 2003). The second alphabetical order, which begins *heh–lamed–ḥet–mem*, is attested in the second millennium in abecedaries from Beth Shemesh and Ugarit, and, partially, from an even earlier ostracon from Thebes (Haring 2015); in the first millennium, it is the standard order of the alphabet in southern Arabia (Irvine and Beeston 1988; the variation found in Central and Northern Arabia discussed by Macdonald 1986 will be put aside as secondary), and Egypt (see below), and continues into the Christian era in Ethiopia (Honeyman 1952).

[4] For biblical and Qumran acrostics, see below.

the same tactic seems to be utilised in Jeremiah's writing of שֵׁשַׁךְ 'Sheshach' for בָּבֶל 'Babylon' (Jer. 25.26; 51.41) and לֵב קָמַי 'Lebkamai' (lit. 'heart of my adversaries') for כַּשְׂדִּים 'Chaldaeans' (Jer. 51.1) (Steiner 1996). The importance for our discussion is that this presupposes a known order for the alphabet, so that 'letters 1, 2, 3' and the corresponding 'letters 22, 21, 20' are culturally meaningful terms.[5]

## 2.0. Metalinguistic Thought

Evidence that alphabet users thought of the letters metalinguistically, not just as signs of sounds, is also ready to hand. Letters are used to mark bricks (Millard *apud* Curtis, Collon, and Green 1989; Millard 2009; Bloch 2018) and ivories (Millard 1962, 49–51), and later, baskets in the Jerusalem Temple: "In three baskets of three *se'ah*s they make the donations of the chamber, and on them was written *'alef*, *bet*, *gimel*. Rabbi Ishmael says, 'Greek was written on them: *alpha*, *bita*, *gamma*'" (m. Sheḳalim 3.2).

Another possible indication of metalinguistic letter use, which also provides evidence for alphabet order, is the numerological calculation known later as *gemaṭria*, in which each letter has a numerical value (for the term, Sambursky 1976). This may have roots in cuneiform literature (Lieberman 1987, 174–76),[6]

[5] Related to this are the suggestions that the verb אָלַף 'learn' (Prov. 22.25) derives from the name of the first letter of the alphabet (Coogan 1990) and that *elementum* derives from the sequence *l–m–n*, i.e., the beginning of the second half of the alphabet (Coogan 1974).

[6] It is not clear what order cuneiform signs would be in. One text oftmentioned in this regard is Sargon II's claim, "I made the measure of its

and it is not implausible that *gemaṭria* was in use already in biblical Israel, for example, in counting words in poems (Knohl 2012; for other examples of 'alphabetical thinking' in Deut. 32, see Skehan 1951) or in the connection between the figure 318 (the number of retainers Abraham brought with him to war according to Gen. 14.14), and the name of Araham's servant, Eliezer (mentioned only once, in the difficult Gen. 15.2; discussion in Gevirtz 1969).

There are certainly instances of *gemaṭria* in Jewish and Christian literature of the Roman era. In 3 Baruch, the number 360 has been plausibly interpreted as the *gemaṭria* of the Greek word *drakon* written in Hebrew (דרקון), and the number 666 in Rev. 13.18 is said to be the *gemaṭria* of "Caesar Nero" (נרון קסר) written the same way (Bohak 1990). Also in the New Testament, Matthew structures he genealogy of Jesus around the number 14, the *gemaṭria* of דוד 'David' – who is fourteenth from Abraham; John's reference to the catch of 153 fish (21:11) may be the *gemaṭria* of עגלים, a place mentioned in Ezekiel 47; the number 153 is also utilised in 4Q252 for the number of days that Noah's flood waters were on the earth (Brooke 1998; cf. Kiley 2008).

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wall 16,283 cubits, (corresponding to) my name (*nibīt šumīya*)." It sounds like Sargon's name has some numerical significance, but as Frahm (2005) points out, no one has yet figured out what this might be, and Frahm says that his attempts to work with the number-syllabary texts published by Pearce were unsuccessful. Indeed, Pearce (1996) collects the evidence for associating cuneiform signs with numerals, but can discern no logic in the associations, suggesting that they are arbitrary. Cf. the insightful discussions of Mullaney (2017) and Tsu (2022, 127–68) on comparable challenges in modern Chinese.

An obvious metalinguistic use of the alphabet in biblical times is the common practice of organising texts, particularly poems, into alphabet acrostics (comparative discussions in Soll 1988; Brug 1990): Nah. 1.2–8 (Arnold 1901); Pss 9–10; 25; 34; 37 (Maloney 2005); Pss 111; 112; 119; 145 (Meyney 2015); Prov. 31:10–31; Lam. 1–4 (Assis 2007); Ben Sira 51:13–30; Ps. 155 (preserved in Syriac and in the Dead Sea Scrolls Psalms Scroll); a Qumran composition labelled the 'Apostrophe to Zion' (in that same Psalms Scroll); and one additional text found in that scroll (Eshel and Strugnell 2000). As the last examples indicate, this practice survived into post-biblical times, as well (Marcus 1947).

Finally in this section we should cite Jesus's saying "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God" (Rev. 1.8; 21.6; 22.13). The theological claim seems to be based on "I am the first and I am the last" (Isa. 44.6).[7] The use of the first and last Greek letters to incarnate, so to speak, the abstract concepts 'first' and 'last' is a dramatic metalinguistic use of the alphabet.

## 3.0. Textual Order

The final element needed to produce the use of alphabetical order is the desirability of textual order. A non-literate society would have no concept of such order, and a town with only three books

[7] The rabbinic 'response' to Jesus's claim is found in Bereshit Rabbah 88.2 (and parallels), where, commenting on the claim that חותמו של הקדוש ברוך הוא אמת 'the seal of the Holy One, blessed be He, is *ʾemet* ('truth'),' Resh Laḳish says, "*ʾalef* from the beginning of the letters, *mem* in the middle, and *taw* from the end, to fulfill 'I am the first and I am the last' [Isa. 44.6]" (see Weiss 2014, 124 fn. 141).

would have no need for one. On the other end of the spectrum, the use of alphabetisation is declining in the twenty-first century, as computing changes the realities of information technology. With dictionaries and library catalogues online, alphabetical order has disappeared from realms in which it used to be dominant.

These two realms—books and lists—are the natural homes of alphabetical order. The organisation of books must go back thousands of years, but as Mesopotamian archival practices are not entirely known, we do not know how the twenty-thousand tablets in Zimri-Lim's palace in Syria from 1800 BCE were organised. It presumably involved division by date and genre (political historical, diplomatic, legal, and domestic records are represented; Sasson 1972), and the use of dockets to label texts (Fales 1986; Abrahami and Coulon 2008; Dalley 2009; Hagen 2011; Hamidović 2014; for the earliest Mesopotamian evidence of archival organisation, see Molina 2016). There was a somewhat comparable structure in lists of Sumerian proverbs, which were grouped by the first sign of the proverb—all the NIG 'thing' proverbs, then all the URU 'city' proverbs, followed by the SA 'heart' proverbs, and so on (Gordon 1954). Both Mesopotamian and Egyptian wordlists, however, had no external order; they are loosely grouped only by word type—all the words for wooden objects, for instance, and then all plants; within the categories, there is no obvious order at all. In Mesopotamia, there are also no 'sequence acrostics', where texts are organised according to sign order.[8]

[8] There are 'message acrostics', in which the initial signs of the lines spell out the name of the author, or a deity, or something else. For this

The archival practices in the library of Alexandria are somewhat better known to us. The library's histories, poems, philosophical works, books on science, on rhetoric, on politics, translated from many languages, defied simple classification (Daly 1967; Canfora 1990; Casson 2001; Olesen-Bagneux 2014), and so it is not surprising that alphabetical order was pressed into use. According to Daly (1967, 25–56),

> it is a reasonable and attractive hypothesis that the [alphabetic] principle was first put to effective use by the scholars of Alexandria in response to the problems they faced as a result of the accumulation under their supervision of such an unprecedented mountain of literature and information.[9]

Lists, too, appear in alphabetical order first in Ptolemaic Egypt (Connor 2018). In surveying the papyri remains, Schironi (2009, 30–36) found nine papyri from the third century BCE to the third century CE that show this order—not a high number, to

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distinction and the Mesopotamian data, see Brug (1990, 293–96). In Egypt there are acrostics organised in sequence, but the sequence shows that they did not have an order of the signs: each stanza begins with a homonym of a numeral, in ascending order.

[9] One alleged early example of alphabetisation is the tradition that Aristotle's studies of 158 constitutions, of which his *Politeiai* was the first, were in alphabetical order. Keaney (1969) argues that this tradition was an invention of later Alexandrian scholars, accustomed as they were to alphabetical order, as does Daly (1967, 16–17); see also Rhodes (1993, 1 fn. 2). (Flanders 2020, 14, misunderstands what is known of Aristotle's works.)

ibe sure, but enough to show that the practice was in use throughout Antiquity. In the late second century, the scribe Menches, in the Egyptian village of Kerkeosiris in the Fayyum, around 135 miles south of Alexandria, made a list of three groups of tenants on crown lands; the three groups are separated by paragraph markers, and within each group, the list is alphabetised by the first letter (Verhoogt 1998, 118). Forty miles further to the south, cartonnage recovered from mummies at El Hibeh included an alphabetical lexicon of many Homeric words (Parsons 2011, 147). On the other hand, many tax rolls, census documents, and lists of soldiers remained untouched by alphabetical order during subsequent centuries.

Numerous other lists from Ptolemaic Egypt show Demotic lists structured in alphabetical order, as well. Although Demotic is not actually an alphabet, these lists have adapted the *idea* of alphabetical order, and grafted it onto the *h-l-ḥ-m* order, as written in Demotic script (the <r> stands in for /l/, which did not exist in Egyptian); the known examples include P. Carlsberg 7 (Iversen 1958, 7–8), P. Saqqara 27 (Smith and Tait 1983, 198–213), O. Deir el-Medina 4-2 (Devauchelle 2014), and P. Berlin 8278 (Gaudard 2012).

As a number of scholars have pointed out (Iversen 1958; Devauchelle 2014, 63–65), Plutarch in the first–second centuries CE wrote that the Egyptian alphabet begins with an ibis, "dedicated to Mercury [i.e., Thoth]" (*Quaes. Conv.* 9.3.2), although Plutarch adds, "But it is not fit, in my opinion, to place an animal that makes no noise at the head of the letters." Until recently it was not clear what Plutarch could have in mind, since (1) the

Egyptians were not known to have had an alphabet and (2) the alphabet does not begin with *hb* 'ibis'. The pattern of texts pieced together in recent decades, however, confirms that Plutarch had good information in this case. He clearly had in mind the *h-l-ḥ-m* order, and within Egypt there had developed a folk etymology for this order that suggested that the alphabet began with *h* because of the sacred ibis.[10]

Up in the Levant, an ostracon believed to be from Herodion shows a list of names that may simply be an elaborate abecedary. It begins with the letters in order (אבגדהוזחטיכלמנס/ עפצקרשת) and then moves to a list of names: אוריה בניה גמריה / דליה הודיה ועי זכריה / חנניה טוביה ירמיה / כוליה לוליה מנחם / נחמיה סמיה / עשיה (Puech 1980). The names were clearly generated for organisational purposes. Remarkably, fragments of what appears to be the same list were found at Masada, as well, suggesting that this was a common way of memorising the alphabet or of practicing writing (Goff 2017, 87).

While documentary evidence is vanishingly rare from sites outside of Egypt and Israel, alphabetical order has also been detected within literary texts, suggesting that it may have played a larger role than the documentary evidence reveals. For example, Virgil gives us a list of Italian heroes in the Aeneid: "Aventinus, Catillus, Coras, Caeculus, Messapus, Clausus, Halaesus, Oebalus,

[10] Note, too, that the fifteenth-century BCE ostracon from Thebes (above fn. 3) has no ibis symbol as the initial letter. Compare, too, the suggestion that the alphabetical order that begins with *ʾalef* 'bull' does so because of the Canaanite bull god El or the equation of El with Hathor (Morenz 2019).

Ufens, Umbro, and Virbius." A. M. Cook wrote more than a century ago that "there is a method of arrangement, which I, or perhaps one of my pupils (I forget now), detected some time ago… The order is obviously alphabetical" (Cook 1919, 103–4).[11] In the late first century BCE, into the first century CE, the freedman Verrius Flaccus wrote an alphabetically arranged encyclopaedia of Roman scholarship, of which only fragments remain.[12] Similarly, a solitary plausible example has been identified in the Mishna, where a list of structurally similar statements seems to be organised alphabetically.[13]

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[11] Given the tenacity with which scholars tend to arrogate credit for themselves, it seems certain that this insight properly belongs to Cook's student, whose name unfortunately remains lost to history. As for the problem of Messapus, Cook simply emends the text and moves *Messapus* to the end, but O'Hara (1989) notes that *Messapus* is in fact a reflex of, or allusion to, *Cycnus*.

[12] See Nettleship (1880, 257–58); I am grateful to Dr Matthew Robinson (p.c.) for pointing me to Flaccus.

[13] Louis Ginzberg *apud* Cohen (1935, 158), finds a partial alphabetical list of questions beginning with מנין 'whence' in m. Shabbat 9 (even more partially paralleled in t. Shabbat 9). Ginzberg notes that the final *samekh* stands in for *śin* (although *resh* is still missing) and adds, "The missing letters can be supplied from other sources."

אמר רבי עקיבה:
מניין לספינה שהיא טהורה?....
מניין לערוגה שהיא שישה על שישה טפחים....
מניין לפולטת שכבת זרע ....
מניין שמרחיצין....
מניין שקושרין....
מניין לסיכה....

## 4.0. Medieval Europe and the Middle East

While Western Europe until the High Middle Ages may not have had need for sophisticated organisational tactics, the same was not true in the east. Flanders (2020, 95–96) argues that it was the increasing number of books in thirteenth-century monasteries and universities which made organisation necessary and invited the renaissance of alphabetisation. In this century, collections in western Europe did in fact grow: Paris University, said to have the largest collection, had something approaching 2000 volumes. At the same time, "five libraries in Baghdad alone numbered between 200,000 and 1,000,000 volumes each, including multiple copies of standard works to ensure many readers' simultaneous access" (Gruendler 2021, 2). The need for organisation was therefore significantly greater, and significantly earlier, in Baghdad than in Paris.

Furthermore, Christians in Western Europe tell us that they spent much less time thinking about the alphabet than the Jews in their midst did. Agobard of Lyon, writing in the early ninth century, wrote that the Jews believe that the letters of the alphabet are primordial, and that prior to the creation of the world the letters fulfilled many tasks, for which they deserve to 'preside' in this world (for text and discussion, see Bonfil 1986). Since Agobard clearly did not believe this, it suggests that alphabetic thinking was foreign to Carolingian Christians at a time when Western European Jews took it for granted.

Indeed, there is remarkably no metalinguistic treatment of the alphabet among the Church Fathers (Ketterer 2005, 257, cited with additional discussion by Weiss 2014, 44–45). Perhaps

this was because they recognised the secondary or even tertiary (i.e., borrowed) nature of the letters they used. Already in the second century, Irenaeus of Lyon wrote,

> It is only recently (as they say, 'yesterday or the day before') that the Greeks received an alphabet of sixteen letters from Cadmus; with the passage of time they discovered the aspirated consonants and the double consonants. Finally, Palamedes added the long vowels.

Responding then to the claim that the letters conveyed truth, Irenaeus says, "Therefore before all that took place among the Greeks Truth did not exist" (*Against Heresies* 1.15; Grant 1997, 61). As Rubin (1998) showed, Greek and Latin church fathers typically understood that Hebrew was the primordial language. Since their alphabets were in any case not the script of God, it is not surprising that Greek and Latin writers spent less time on the significance of the letters of their script. In the east, though, the situation was different: Syriac church fathers argued that the world was created in Syriac.

Off in the east, the tradition of using the alphabet for many types of non-linguistic purposes was alive and well. This means looking primarily at Hebrew and Syriac in the middle of the first millennium, and at Arabic and Hebrew in the latter part of the millennium and into the second millennium. When alphabetisation reappears in western Europe around the year 1200, then, it involves the *rediscovery* of the heritage of the Semitic world.

The alphabet was intensively studied and contemplated in the east. Space constraints preclude even a survey; suffice it to note that the Samaritans, especially as seen in *Tibåt Mårqe* (Tal 2019; see also Weiss 2005), Jews (in rabbinic literature and other

works such as *Sefer Yeṣirah*; Weiss 2014; 2017), Syriac Christians (Weiss 2011; 2012; 2017, 55–75), Mandeans (Drower 1960, 17–20), Byzantine Greeks, and Copts all thought about the alphabet in similar and connected ways (Paz and Weiss 2015). All of this suggests that the traditions of metalinguistic thinking about the alphabet were alive and well from Antiquity through the Middle Ages in the entire alphabetic world—except Western Europe.

Not only was alphabetical thinking present, but alphabetical order was used in the Semitic and eastern worlds throughout the first millennium CE. Although we have no direct evidence for libraries or lists, there is ample evidence of other kinds. Alphabetic acrostics are found in Jewish liturgical poetry of the Byzantine era from mystical circles, such as Hekhalot texts, e.g., אל אדון על כל המעשים and האדרת והאמונה (Bar-Ilan 1987, 16–19, 115); rabbinic liturgy, e.g., the *musaf* prayer for *shabbat* (a complete reverse acrostic: תכנת שבת, רצית קרבנותיה. צוית פרושיה עם סדורי נסכיה. מענגיה לעולם כבוד ינחלו. טועמיה חיים זכו, וגם האוהבים דבריה גדולה בחרו. אז מסיני...); poets such as Yannai and Yose b. Yose; and Aramaic poems, e.g., אזל משה (Yahalom 1978; Sokoloff and Yahalom 1999, 92–96; Sysling 2006).[14]

Syriac literary tradition is full of examples of alphabetically-arranged poetry. According to a later writer, the third-century Aphrahat "wrote two books, and many poems alphabetically arranged" (Mar Abd Yeshua, late thirteenth century, cited in

[14] There are also midrashic texts in which the letters of the alphabet appear, sometimes to parade in front of God, as in Ekha Rabbah *Petiḥta* 24. In such texts, they always appear, of course, in alphabetical order.

Badger 1852, 369). Aphrahat's own prose writings are also organised into 22 books, each beginning with a letter of the alphabet. Dozens of Syriac poems are organised alphabetically. Dialogue poems in particular adopt the form, giving each speaker one line for each of the 22 letters (Brock 1991).

When lexicography comes into view in the Islamic world, alphabetical order is back in full force (for a comprehensive survey, see Baalbaki 2014).[15] The first known Arabic lexicon, the *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* of al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farahidi (d. 786), is organised based on the letters' phonetic values (see discussion in Haywood 1960, 21–22, and Baalbaki 2014), and so the slightly later *Kitāb al-Jīm* is said to be "the first… lexicon known to us which uses the alphabetical system" (Baalbaki 2014, 330). But even the earlier *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* apologises for not being so organised: Al-Farahīdī's student and editor, Al-Layth ibn al-Muẓaffar, wrote:

> he could not begin his composition from the beginning of the *ʾalif*, *bāʾ*, *tāʾ*, *thāʾ*, which is *ʾalif*, because the *ʾalif* is a sick letter.[16] But when he passed the first letter, he was loath to begin with the second (which is *bāʾ*) without pretext and careful consideration. He organised and observed all of the letters… And al-Khalīl inverted the *ʾalif*, *bāʾ*, *tāʾ*,

[15] Baalbaki (2014) has sections on various types of works: specifically alphabetised works (112–20); proverb collections (329–63).

[16] It should be noted that the original order of the Arabic alphabet was the inherited Aramaic/Hebrew order, *ʾalef–bet–gimel–dalet*, and so on, and this order is still reflected in the numerical use of the letters. Within Arabic the letters were secondarily reorganised to reflect commonalities of shape, and that is the order reflected here (*ʾalif*, *bāʾ*, *tāʾ*, *thāʾ*, etc.).

> *thā*ʾ, and he placed them in proportion to [the distance of] their articulation point from the throat. (Posegay 2021, 179–82)

Thus, at the very dawn of Arabic lexicography in the eighth century, the default assumption was that words would be in alphabetical order.

As we see in the *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, the expectation of finding a work organised alphabetically was not always met. The decision of how to organise a work tells us something about the *purpose* of these lexica: for ease of consultation, alphabetical order was unmatched, but some were instead intended for systematic study, in which case other orders proved more practical (Dichy 2019). This pragmatic consideration was articulated by Al-Bandanījī (d. 897) in the introduction to his *Rhyme Dictionary* of rare words; as he explains, were it not alphabetised, it would be difficult for a user to learn from the book, "because the lexicon is vast and voluminous" (Gruendler 2021, 48).

It is not surprising, then, that most later Arabic lexicons were indeed in alphabetical order (Haywood 1960, 53, 98–99; Sanni 1992, esp. 157), although there was no uniformity concerning the details. Some were organised alphabetically by first letter, and others by last letter; some specialised lexicons were organised thematically, e.g., from head to toe in a monograph on the human body (Gruendler 2021, 45; 70–71). The most influential alphabetically arranged Arabic dictionary was that of al-Zamakhsharī (1074–1143), the *ʾAsas al-Balaghah* 'The Foundation of Eloquence'.

The ubiquitous alphabetical order regularly crossed cultural and linguistic borders. Within medieval Jewish texts, alphabetical order structures Masoretic lists (Dotan 2005, 32–40, 77–83, and *passim*). Masoretic lists contributed to the rise of Hebrew lexicography, and some of the earliest such wordlists, too, display alphabetical order of at least the first letter (Dotan 2005, 150–64).

In the ninth and tenth centuries, the Jews Judah ibn Ḳuraysh in Algeria, Saʿadya Gaon in Baghdad,[17] David Al-Fasi in Jerusalem, and Menaḥem ben Saruq in Cordoba all produced lexicographical works organised alphabetically (survey in Brisman 2000, 1–14).[18] The antecedents to this practice appear in ninth-

[17] Saʿadya's *ʾEgron* has a double alphabetical order: the first part is ordered according to the first two letters, the second, for use by poets searching for rhymes, according to the last letter.

[18] Téné, Maman, and Barr (2007) note that alphabetical order was firmly established in the Jewish world by its use in the pinnacle of medieval Hebrew lexicography, the *Book of Roots* (*Kitāb al-Usūl*) by Ibn Janāḥ. *Kitāb al-Usūl* is the first dictionary in which alphabetical order is followed in careful detail, even to the third letter of roots. (There are some quirks in his system.) Dachman pointed out that in Ibn Janāḥ's work of medicines, *Kitāb al-Talḫīṣ*, the plants are separated by first letter, but not alphabetised beyond that (see Bos et al. 2020). Dachman further points out that Ibn Janāḥ's contemporary, Shmuel ha-Nagid, also wrote an alphabetically ordered dictionary entitled *Kitāb al-Istiġnāʾ*. The existence of the work is known from mentions by Abraham ibn Ezra, who even tells us that it is in 22 sections; the work itself is known from fragments published by Kokovtsov (1916, 207–24), and these show alphabetisation to the third root letter. There are also citations in

century Masoretic works which contain alphabetically ordered lists of words, such as a list of "pairs with different interpretations, which require that the scholar stop and memorise them, since their meanings are very close" (Martínez Delgado 2009; for the text, see 359–62). In a different linguistic milieu—but a similar cultural world—the tenth-century Byzantine *Suda* 'Stronghold', a massive Greek historical encyclopaedia of the ancient Mediterranean world, was also alphabetical.

A closer look at some of these works is particularly illuminating. Menaḥem ben Saruq's dictionary is comprised of 22 'fascicles' (*maḥbarot*), one for each letter of the alphabet.[19] Alphabetisation extends beyond basic structure, serving as the default organisational principle on smaller scales, as well. For example, Menaḥem has a number of lists within his lexicon. Early on, he includes a list of biblical *hapax legomena*—in alphabetical order

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an anonymous Psalms commentary partially preserved in the Cairo Geniza (Peretz 2000).) Since ha-Nagid was working in dialogue with Ibn Janāḥ's ongoing work, the structure is presumably due to influence of his contemporary (see also del Valle Rodríguez 2009).

[19] On the manuscript evidence for the order of entries in Menahem's Mahberet, see Yahalom and Sáenz-Badillos (1985, esp. esp. 257–58). There are two traditions in two different groups of manuscripts. The oldest manuscripts, and eastern manuscripts, have two-letter alphabetisation. In a different group of manuscripts, the lexemes within each initial letter are divided into two groups: biliteral words followed by triliteral words—in full alphabetical order. Yahalom and Sáenz-Badillos suggest that it is impossible to know what the original order was, but Menaḥem uses alphabetical order even *within* his lexicon (see immediately below), suggesting that this was his default structuring tactic.

(Menaḥem ben Saruq 1986, 106*; the list is included by association in the entry s.v. גלב, which is a *hapax legomenon*). He also provides examples of Hebrew roots that contain three letters (אזר, בחן, גדע, דרש, הרס, זרע, חטף, טרף) and roots that contain two letters (אץ, בר, גש, דש, הס, זע, חל, טע, יף, כל) (Menaḥem ben Saruq, 74*). In these cases, the lists are not comprehensive, but illustrative: he chooses one for each letter of the alphabet. When he needs to provide examples of words that begin with *taw*, they come in the order תאנה, תבונה, תגרת, תודת, תהפוכות, תכלית, תלפיות, תמורתה, תרמית, תשורה, תשומת, תשים.[20]

Menaḥem's great critic, Dunash ben Labrāṭ, did not arrange the first half of his animadversions on Menaḥem's dictionary alphabetically, but in the middle of his work switches to alphabetical order, explicitly telling the reader that he is doing so: "Behold I will arrange for you the remainder / according to the alphabet" (Sáenz-Badillos 1980, 62*; translation from Dachman 2025). His alphabetisation extends only to the first letter, though, so אספות comes before אגורה, for example.

David al-Fāsī writes in his introduction that his dictionary is organised in 22 parts, one for each letter of the alphabet, and then each is theoretically subdivided into a further 22 parts, so that the book is structured by the first two letters of the root. He

[20] All of the lists within Menaḥem's classification of the letters are in alphabetical order; see text and translation in Dachman (2022, 138–50). Dachman observed that Saʿadya, al-Fāsī, and Menaḥem also sometimes present the letters themselves in alphabetical order when giving lists of letters that serve various grammatical functions.

then notes, however, that there are combinations that are not attested: there are no roots that begin אא, no roots that begin בף, and so on. His counting gives a total of 364 combinations (out of a possible 484), and these, he emphasises, are to be found in precisely this order—with the exception of words beginning with *waw*, which are at the beginning, because there are no verbal roots in that category (al-Fāsī 1936, 1.2–4 [Judaeo-Arabic text] and lxvi–lxviii [abridged English translation, without the enumeration]; Blau 2020, 21–22 [my thanks to Joshua Dachman for this reference]).

The ability of alphabetical order to cross boundaries is also seen in a text which emerged from the Cairo Geniza a decade ago: a 'medical text' consisting of a list of plants and their medicinal properties (T-S K 14.22). Remarkably, the text is written in Syriac, but in Jewish script. Even more remarkably, the terms for the plants are first given in Greek (in Hebrew characters), then translated into Syriac, and finally glossed also in Middle Persian.[21] The most remarkable fact, though, is that the list is in alphabetical order, apparently according to the Greek name. The editor even notes this in the middle of the text, when he writes: שלם סדרא דתרי עשר דאיתיו למד ואף השא או חביבן כתבינן סדרא דתלת עשר דאיתיו מים "Finished is the twelfth chapter, which is *lamed*. And also now, O our beloved, we write the thirteenth chapter, which is *mem*."

[21] See Bhayro (2012; 2014 with some corrections and additions); for greater detail see Müller-Kessler (2017), who disagrees with Bhayro on a number of important issues, which do not, however, affect the present discussion.

To complete the historiographical circle, it should be observed that other medieval European innovations in the structure of writing are the results of contact with eastern books, particularly Hebrew. Thus, for example, the biblical chapter divisions that appear first in England in around 1180 seem to have been inspired by the *sedarim* that divide the Hebrew text in Jewish Bible texts (Saenger with Bruck 2008; Saenger 2012; 2013). One particularly relevant manuscript, Corpus Christi College (Cambridge) 48, also has three columns of text on the page, comparable to Hebrew biblical texts. CCC 48 is particularly relevant for thinking about how alphabetical order may have gotten to Latin scribes of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, because it has a beautiful double *ʾalef-bet* decorating the first page of Lamentations. The text of Lamentations—with acrostic structure—is then adorned in the margins with the Hebrew letters that begin each verse.[22]

[22] The manuscript is viewable at https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/wx717zj2675; the beginning of Lamentations is 121r (the section is still labelled "Jeremias" on the top of the page). I am grateful to Loraine Enslow and Prof. David Lavinsky for discussing this manuscript with me and for sharing their insights.

Figure 1: Corpus Christi College (Cambridge) 48

There is ample reason to think that alphabetisation, too, arrived in Europe around 1200 from the Semitic world.[23] The alphabetic thinking in this manuscript extends beyond this dramatic introduction: each verse in Lamentations 1-4 is marked in the margin by the Hebrew letter with which it begins, and in Lam. 3, this means marginal notes such as, "*Joth – Joth – Joth – Caph – Caph – Caph*," and so on. The same practice is found in Prov. 31.10–31, although the Hebrew is nowhere evident in the

[23] See, too, Daly 1967, 74, noting the rise in alphabetisation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and commenting, "To those familiar with the great burst of scholarly activity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the developments just discussed will not be surprising."

text itself (158v–159r).[24] Finally, the manuscript ends (266r–276r) with an eleven-page, alphabetically arranged list of names of people and places.

The upshot of all this is that the Arabic tradition of alphabetisation, which drew on earlier traditions, is likely to be the source of the rise in Latin alphabetisation visible to medievalists beginning in the thirteenth century. This was probably mediated through Jewish books, which travelled, physically and intellectually, from the Islamicate world to that of Latin Christendom, bringing many of their metatextual practices along with them. Thus, when historians inquire as to the origins of the practice of alphabetical order in the European Middle Ages, they need to begin to look south and east, where Hebrew and Arabic books were being produced at a much greater rate than Latin books. The vibrant book cultures of the Jews and Muslims left a deep impression on the Christian book culture of the High Middle Ages.

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[24] Here the scribe also marked the beginning of each verse with a red or blue rubric, as he sometimes does when—so it seems—each verse is seen to be a new unit; compare the practice in Exodus 21–23

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# "EVERY GLANCE OF THEIR EYES—LIKE A FLAME, TWO FLAMES": A CASE OF UGARITIC GT *'MR* 'SEE' RECONSIDERED*

*Tania Notarius*

## 1.0. Introduction

The semantic analysis of the Gt-stem and its position in the development of the Ugaritic verbal system is a matter of intensive scholarly interest. Simply labelling the Gt-stem as de-transitive and reflexive is not enough: Ugaritic Gt verbs are dynamic, agentive, and transitive (cf. Krebernik 1991, 237–39; Sivan 2001, 128; Huehnergard 2012, 64; Tropper 2012, 531–32).[1] The main func-

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tions of the stem are autobenefactive/intensifying (1), direct reflexive (2), indirect reflexive (3), reciprocal (4), and denominative (5) with an animate Agent used as a subject:[2]

(1) *bʿl ytlk wyṣd*
'DN scoured and combed' (*KTU* 1.12 I 34)

(2) *trtḥṣ btlt ʿnt tptrʿ*
'the Virgin DN washed herself, bathed herself' (*KTU* 1.13:19)

(3) *mḫmšt yỉtspršp*
'the fifth (wife) DN gathered to himself' (*KTU* 1.14 I 18)

(4) *w hln ʿnt tmtḥṣ b ʿmq tḫtṣb bn qrytm*
'and look! DN fought in the valley, she fought between (the) two cities' (*KTU* 1.3 II 5–7)

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The quotations of the examples are from *KTU*[3]. Many translations are harmonised with *DULAT*.

[1] A thorough formal and semantic analysis, along with a comprehensive list of the Gt-verbs in the corpus, is found in Notarius (2021).

[2] The autobenefactive usage, crucial for the present interpretation—also called 'self-benefactive', 'self-referential dative', 'emphatic reflexive', etc.—is a typologically common syntactic construction by which a beneficiary coreferential with the Agent is applied to emphasise the Agent's position. If Agent–Beneficiary coreferentiality is less important, the event—or one of its stages—is intensified (see Kemmer 1993, 180–82; Kazenin 2001, 916–27; Kulikov 2010, 21–25; Smith 2010, 70–95; Zúñiga and Kittilä 2019, 82–119).

(5) *w ṯmn tṯtmnm lk*
‘and eight (sons) she will give you’ (*KTU* 1.15 II 24)

The stem functions differently in the poetic and prosaic registers of the language. While the autobenefactive/intensifying usage is equally distributed in both registers, direct reflexive, indirect reflexive, reciprocal, and denominative usages are entirely poetic. On the other hand, the patientive, anticausative, and resultative interpretations are attested relatively rarely, and mainly in prosaic language, specifically in sentences with an inanimate subject:

(6) *ytšỉ l ảb bn ỉl ytšỉ l dr bn ỉl*
‘may (the sacrifice) rise to the father of the gods, rise to the family circle of DN!’ (*KTU* 1.40:24–5)

In view of these data, one case of Gt of the root *ʾmr* ‘see’ is particularly challenging:

(7) *ỉšt ỉštm yỉtmr ḫrb lṭšt [lš]nhm*
‘(like) a blaze, two blazes they *yỉtmr* (?), a sharpened sword is their tongue’ (*KTU* 1.2 I 32–33)

The case appears in a poetic context, and its interpretation—pertinent to the interpretation of the whole pericope—has engendered scholarly debate. Mark Smith (1994, 267, 306–7), along with many other scholars, reads Gt **ʾmr* in *KTU* 1.2 I 32 as patientive anticausative, translating it as ‘appear, show up’. In line with this interpretation, two of Yamm’s messengers arrived at Ilu’s assembly; the assembled gods lowered their heads before them; standing straight, and without bowing down, the envoys

"appeared" like "a fire (flame, blaze), two fires (flames, blazes)."[3] However, this Gt-verb can have an agentive intensifying interpretation as well: "(like?) a blaze, two blazes he/they looked (glanced)," as suggested in several grammatical studies.[4] One must admit that, as outlined above, the latter interpretation is more consistent with the functional scope and distribution of the Gt-stem in Ugaritic: the autobenefactive/intensifying usage with an animate Agent is distinctive of the poetic register, whereas an anticausative interpretation would require an inanimate subject and appears typically in prose.[5]

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[3] See also *DULAT* (69); Caquot, Sznycer, and Herdner (1974, 131); de Moor (1987, 33); Coogan and Smith (2012, 112); Tugendhaft (2018, 135). The passive interpretation 'were seen' is not usually suggested, perhaps because the Gt-stem does not generally have passive semantics.

[4] Tropper (2012, 519–20) emphasises the basic intensifying function of the Gt-stem of this root and draws a comparison with a similar El-Amarna usage (EA 74:52; 237:16–18 'see, experience, look'); for the case in 1.2 I 32, Tropper hesitates between two interpretations—anticausative 'appear' ("aussehen") and an agentive 'look' ("erblicken"). Sivan (2001, 130) insists on the Gt's agentive intensifying function, translating as a transitive: 'he views (a burnished sword)'. Krebernik's analysis (1991, 237–38, 241) reflects two options: the case is possibly passive "gesehen werden" = "erscheinen," but could also be interpreted as a dynamic transitive "sehen" with Ilu as subject.

[5] Ayali-Darshan (2020, 88) translates "(their) utterance is (like) a flame," apparently based on the meaning 'speak' of the root *ʾmr*, but with little grammatical discussion, noting in fn. 62: "The Ugaritic *yiṯmr* may also be translated in the sense of 'sight'. In light of the subsequent parallels, however, the rendering above is preferable."

In what follows I argue for the agentive intensifying interpretation of the Gt verb **ʾmr*—'look at, glance, glimpse'—in *KTU* 1.2 I 32. I try to demonstrate that this interpretation is more linguistically sound, and that it matches the lexical meaning and grammatical function of this verb in Ugaritic (§2.1). This claim finds further support in a stylistic argument (§2.2). As part of the descriptive insertion within the narrative flow, the verse under discussion is one among the parallel bi-cola that depict elements of the envoys' facial appearance, i.e., their eyes and tongue, communicating their speech intention. The depiction of the divine messengers is to be considered within wider ancient Near Eastern contexts (§3.0); it is claimed that these characters are not represented as fire deities, and that they do not acquire blazing appearances. The flame-like glance of their eyes—suggested by the interpretation advocated here—is an image that typically characterises a divine or monstrous figure who can employ their blazing eyes and tongues as weapons.

## 2.0. Gt *ʾmr* 'glance, look at' in Ugaritic: A Lexical and Grammatical Analysis

### 2.1. Lexical and Morphological Properties

The root *ʾmr* is common in Semitic for perception and speech. As a verb of perception it is attested in Akkadian *amāru* 'see, behold' (*AHw* 40ff.; *CAD* A/2: 5–27) and in Amorite *ʾmr* 'see' (Golinets 2018, 362–63); in the newly published bilingual Amorite-Akkadian tablets the verb in this root has the meaning 'speak' (cf. A. George and Krebernik 2022), text 1:29, text 2:12. In Ethiopic the

meaning of perception takes on the nuance of cognition or cognitive guidance and, subsequently, speech: *ʾaʾmara* ‘to know’, *ʾammara* ‘to show, tell’ (Leslau 1989, 134–35). The meaning of cognitive guidance is also attested in Ebla: IGI.ŠÈ.DU = *a-me-lum* ‘guide’ (Fronzaroli 1984, 135; cf. Müller 1984, 182; Krebernik 1988, 54; Kogan and Krebernik 2021, 901). In Hebrew and in Arabic, contrary to Akkadian, *ʾmr* is a root of speech (*HALOT* 65ff.; Lane 1863, 95ff.).[6]

The Gt-stem of the root *ʾmr* in Akkadian is not widely used: according to *AHw* (41), there is a plausible attestation in Neo-Babylonian with the meaning ‘see henceforth’ (“von nun an sehen(?)”) in “(das Kind) *li-ta-mar* das Sonnenlicht”. Kouwenberg (2010, 362, 398) claims that the verb may have had a reciprocal meaning ‘meet’ (starting from Old Assyrian).[7] Golinets (2018, 193–94) claims that in Amorite onomastics the verb is attested as a verbal adjective *a-ta-am-rV*, *a-tam-rV*, *a-tam-ra* with a medio-passive meaning ‘is seen, appear’ (“angesehen”), whereas the form with a theophoric element—*a-tam-ri*-DINGIR and *a-tam-ri-el*—is hardly Amorite, but corresponds to the Akkadian perfect ‘I have seen god’.[8]

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[6] This meaning of the root is attested also in Sabaic (Beeston 1982, 6) and Phoenician (Krahmalkov 2001, 61).

[7] Kouwenberg notes that the reciprocal of the *amāru* is regularly expressed by the N-stem.

[8] Golinets compares Akkadian [f]*A-ta-mar-qāt-sa* and *A-ta-mar-ra-bu-sa* ‘Ich have ihre Macht/Größe gesehen’. In view of the present discussion, the medio-passive interpretation of the verbal adjective *a-ta-am-rV* in

In Ugaritic the verbal usages of the root *ʾmr* in the meaning 'say' are uncertain, but a cognate noun means 'order, demand':[9] *qmm ảṯr ảmr* 'standing up they transmitted (their) demand' (*KTU* 1.2 I 31; see also *KTU* 1.16 IV 1; 2.33:13).[10] The meaning 'see, look at' is attested twice altogether in the Gt-stem: in addition to the case under discussion—see ex. (7), further expanded in ex. (10)—there is another explicit case of the Gt-form in an agentive

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Amorite is not self-evident; the usage in Amorite is beyond the scope of the present essay.

[9] See *DULAT* (69) *ảmr* (I) "order, command; word." The nominal lexeme *ảmr* is attested in Ugaritic personal names in cuneiform writing: cf. *a-mar*-dIM (PRU 4 108 [RS 18.114]:6; PRU 4 166 [RS 17.129]:3, 5); and *a-mur*-dIM (Ug 5 51 [RS 20.158]:7). The verbal root 'see' is attested in Akkadian lexical lists from Ugaritic: *a-ma-ru* (Ug 5 133 [RS 23.493+] obv. 7; Ug 5 134 [RS 20.426 D]:1).

[10] The phrase *ảṯr ảmr* (1.2 I 31) is textually debated: Smith (1994, 260–63, 267) follows the reading *ʾa◦◦.ʾamr*, reconstructs and vocalises *ʾamāru* (?) *ʾamarā* 'they speak a speech', as a tautological infinitive with suffix conjugation. This is not accepted in other editions: cf. *KTU*[3]: *aṯr.amr*, thus also in *DULAT* (69, 123): "they transmitted (their) demand". For D *ảṯr* as a verb of speech 'force to follow, transmit' cf. Dietrich and Loretz (1984).

Huehnergard (2012, 135) explicitly mentions both Ugaritic meanings of the root *ʾmr*. Kogan (2015, 331) claims that "Ugaritic must be the only Semitic language where this archaic meaning ['see'] is attested virtually side by side with the innovative 'to say', 'to command', normal for the rest of C[entral]S[emitic]." According to Gelb (1980, 14), the Amorite onomasticon attests both meanings—'see' and 'say', similar to Ugaritic. *DULAT* (69) remains ambiguous about the relation between the two meanings and suggests *ʾmr* I 'see' and *ʾmr* II 'say'. On Ugaritic cf. Haldar (1964, 275), Sanmartín (1973, 263–70).

intensified meaning ‘look at’ in ex. (8)—both times in the prefix conjugation (de Moor 1987, 33; Smith and Pitard 2009, 97, 115; Tropper 2012, 52). The form *yảmr*, which appears in a very broken and obscure passage—ex. (9)—is either D- or N-stem: the spelling with *å* precludes a translation (Tropper 2012, 546; cf. also Bordreuil, Pardee, and Roche-Hawley 2019, 241–43). Both cases of the Gt *ʾmr* ‘see’ are in poetic contexts—cf. exs (7)–(8).

(8) *ytmr bʿl bnth yʿn pdry bt ảr ảpn ṯly bt rb*
‘Baal looked at his daughters, he saw Pdry, daughter of ʾAr, also Ṯly, daughter of Rb’ (*KTU* 1.3 I 22)

(9) *]hn w l yảmr*
‘?’ (*KTU* 1.172:22)

## 2.2. Syntactic and Stylistic Considerations

The case in *KTU* 1.2 I 32 comes in a narrative passage that reports the arrival of Yamm’s messengers at Ilu’s divine court. This report is a fulfilment of Yamm’s instructions for his messengers in lns 13–17. As is common in this stylistic pattern, the direct discourse and its narration present a nearly verbatim match. However, two parallel half-verses in lns 32–33 with the debated *yỉtmr* are a descriptive insertion within the narrative, with no precedent in the instructive section:

(10) *ảḫr tmġyn mlảk ym tʿdt ṯpṭ nhr l pʿn ỉl l tpl l tštḫwy pḫr mʿd qmm ảṯr ảmr* [*ṯn*]*y dʿthm ỉšt ỉštm yỉtmr ḥrb lṭšt [lš]nhm rgm…*
‘When Yamm’s messengers arrived, the legation of Judge River, at Ilu’s feet they did not fall, they did not bow down before the assembled council. Standing they transmitted their word, repeated their instruction. (Like) a blaze, two

blazes *yỉtmr* (?), sharpened sword is their tongue. They said…' (*KTU* 1.2 I 30–33)

To start with, the subject of the Gt-form *yỉtmr* in ex. (10) can be interpreted in different ways.[11] If the subject is Ilu, mentioned in the preceding context (*l pʿn ỉl* 'at Ilu's feet'), the dynamic transitive interpretation of the verb *yỉtmr* is preferrable—'(as) a fire, two fires he (Ilu) looked at (them)'. This interpretation suggests an abrupt and obscure shift to a non-topical—otherwise marginal—agent Ilu, at a point where another agent—the messengers—is the explicit subject before and after this debated clause. The phrase "fire, two fires" as a subject would require a middle anticausative interpretation of the verb ("a fire, two fires appeared"), but this interpretation, at odds with the agreement pattern (*ỉšt* is feminine), is to be rejected. The messengers are possibly the subject, in which case both dynamic agentive and middle anticausative interpretations are possible, as mentioned above. A dual agreement pattern is favoured in several interpretations (Dobrusin 1981, 8; Smith 1994, 306).[12] Although reasonable, the *y-* prefix for masculine dual in *yỉtmr* contrasts with the *t*-prefix of other prefix-conjugation forms in the context in reference to the messengers: *tmġyn*, *tṯl*, and *tštḥwy*. In view of this inconsistency, I interpret the singular "messenger" as the verbal

[11] On the subject in this case, see Dobrusin (1981, 8 note 12), Krebernik (1991, 240–41), and Smith (1994, 306), and the references there.

[12] *DULAT* (69) notes that the subject may be *ỉštm* [FDU] or "messengers" [MDU], cf. the vocalisation *yiʾtamarā* in *DULAT* (267).

form's subject, with a distributive function—each of the messengers *yỉtmr*.[13] The phrase *ỉšt ỉštm* is a numeric formula in the singular and the dual "two fires" is used as a comparative phrase in the accusative.[14]

Furthermore, the descriptive insertion in lns 32–33 interrupts the course of the events immediately prior to the moment of delivery of the message and describes the messengers' appearance. The description, as part of the direct speech framework, communicates the speakers' illocutionary intentions.[15] It focuses on the speech organs employed in the speech act: the second half-verse refers to the speakers' tongues, which are compared to a sharpened sword—*ḥrb lṭšt [lš]nhm*. The first half-verse apparently refers to a body part as well, namely eyes casting burning glances. I claim that the comparison "like a flame, two flames"

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[13] For the distributive use of the singular, cf. יְכַסֶּה 'each one (of seraphim) cover', וְקָרָא 'each one (of them) call' (Isa. 6.2–3).

[14] Cf. Smith (1994, 267) who vocalises it as a nominative *ʾišītu ʾišītāmi*, rather than as an accusative of adverbial comparison, *ʾišīta ʾšītêmi*, adding (306 fn. 157):

> This stylistic repetition is reflected in *raḥam raḥmātayim,* "a girl, two girls" in Judges 5:30. It may be noted that just as the nouns of construct phrases may appear in poetic parallelism, so also two nouns together, the first singular, the second dual may appear in poetic parallelism as in *riqmâ/riqmatayim* in Judg 5:30.

Cf. also Melamed (1961). According to *DULAT* (505), the second form in the phrase *ỉštm* is in the singular with an emphatic particle *-m*.

[15] On patterns of representing direct discourse in Akkadian, see Vogelzang (1990). On BH, cf. Miller (1996).

refers not to Yamm's messengers as such, but metonymically to the flames in their eyes. Both components of this imagery—sword-sharpened tongue and flame-burning eyes—liken facial components to weapons, emphasising the imprudence and aggressiveness of the speech act.

The suggested translation of *ỉšt ỉštm yỉtmr* in ex. (10) is 'like a flame, two flames each one (of them) looked around/glanced at (the assembly)'. Just as their tongues struck like sharpened swords, so their eyes shot out, or burned like, flames.

## 3.0. Literary Context and Symbolism: Flames, Glances, and Divine Envoys

The patientive anticausative interpretation of the Gt *ʾmr* in *KTU* 1.2 I 32–33 'to appear (as fire)' finds support in ancient Near Eastern contexts. According to Smith, it entails a view that "minor divinities embody fiery form"; they presumably appear as fire (Smith 1994, 306; cf. also de Moor 1987, 33 fn. 143). However, the agentive intensifying reading advocated here—'look at, glance'—also has literary parallels, but presupposes a different model: that fiery facial organs are used by divine figures as weapons of deterrence and punishment.

Ancient Near Eastern fire imagery is a broad topic that cannot be exhausted within the scope of this essay (Miller 1965; Watson 1999a, 331–32; 1999b, 335–36). Just a few observations may be offered in support of the present grammatical interpretation. A distinction is to be made between divinities that are fire themselves and those that appear in the shape of fire or have flaming limbs.

Fire-gods are found in different cultural contexts. Smith (1994, 306 fn. 158) compares the divine messengers in *KTU* 1.2 I 32 to the Babylonian divinities *Išum* and *Išatu* from Ebla. As George claims, the Babylonian deity *Išum* was considered an offspring of the sun-god *Šamaš*. He was "set alight and left in the street" at birth. His primary function (similar to that of his Sumerian counterpart, Ḫendursanga) was as a 'Night Watchman' who protects houses and streets, providing light in the dark. This light was either a burning torch or a firebrand. This was also the light that he used to lead gods into battle in the Late Babylonian poem "Erra and Išum," one of the main literary sources about this deity. In line with this imagery, *Išum* is born light, and uses his staff to give light for practical purposes (George 2015).[16]

The feminine divine name ì-sa-túm ( = $^{d}$izi ) /ʾIšātum/ 'fire' is attested in Ebla once in a lexical list and another time in an administrative text (Fronzaroli 1984, 143; Pomponio and Xella 1997, 201; Mander 2005, 23–24, 26, 34, 70). Not much is known about her functions, but evidence from Ugarit may provide some help: Anat reports that *mḫšt k*{.}*lbt ỉlm ỉšt* 'I crushed the Divine Bitch, Išitu' (*KTU* 1.3 III 45).[17] According to Pomponio and Xella (1997, 201), this female deity was probably connected to the primordial forces of chaos, but lost most of her relevance. Perhaps the West Semitic deity *Reshef* originally possessed some fire-gods properties, but developed other characteristics as well (Xella 1999).

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[16] According to Pomponio and Xella (1997, 201), the Ugaritic *ỉṯm* (1.148:31) is a related deity; cf. *DULAT* (123).

[17] On the syllabic reading of this name see Van Soldt (1991, 732).

Divine messengers or other creatures, who themselves are not fire-gods, can appear in the shape of fire or use fire for different purposes. In the Hebrew Bible, there are several unambiguous examples of divine messengers, or God himself, appearing in the shape of fire, presumably to attract attention, reveal his glory, or elicit reverence: in 'And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire (בְּלַבַּת־אֵשׁ) out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed' (Exod. 3.2), God's messenger appears as a flame of fire to attract Moses's attention; 'Who makes winds his messengers; flames of fire (אֵשׁ לֹהֵט) his ministers' (Ps. 104.4) mentions God's ability to send wind and fiery-flame messengers;[18] in 'The angel of the LORD ascended in the flame (בְּלַהַב) of the altar: and Manoah and his wife looked on; and they fell on their faces to the ground' (Judg. 13.20) God's messenger appears as a flame of fire to attract human attention and warn; in 'chariot of fire, and horses of fire (רֶכֶב־אֵשׁ וְסוּסֵי אֵשׁ)' (2 Kgs 2.11) fiery transport is sent from the heavens to take Elijah.

Somewhat different is the image of a saviour-god in

(11) עָלָה עָשָׁן בְּאַפּוֹ וְאֵשׁ מִפִּיו תֹּאכֵל גֶּחָלִים בָּעֲרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ
'There went up smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured; coals burned out from his (appearance).' (2 Sam. 22.9; cf. also Isa. 30.27–33)

In contrast to fire-gods or fire-messengers, the fire in this passage is neither within god's essential nature nor a temporary

[18] '…[P]erhaps demythologized minor deities, but more probably metaphors for lightning" (Watson 1999a, 332).

appearance, but an attribute associated with the face and its organs: nostrils, mouth, and perhaps eyes (גַּחֲלִים). The function of these fiery organs is to signal danger, frighten, or potentially strike with speech. The eyes of Mesopotamian gods can be sparkling and dangerous: in the Old Babylonian Ishtar Hymn, her eyes are described as being multicoloured and iridescent—*bitrāmā īnāša šitʾarā* 'her eyes twinkle and sparkle' (Charpin, Edzard, and Stol 2004, 509–14). In Egyptian mythology the underworld demon Apopis wants to rob the fire-spewing eye of Rēʿ (Borghouts 1973).

One finds similar imagery—but applied to a monstrous figure—in

(12) עֲטִישֹׁתָיו תָּהֶל אוֹר וְעֵינָיו כְּעַפְעַפֵּי־שָׁחַר: מִפִּיו לַפִּידִים יַהֲלֹכוּ כִּידוֹדֵי אֵשׁ יִתְמַלָּטוּ: מִנְּחִירָיו יֵצֵא עָשָׁן כְּדוּד נָפוּחַ וְאַגְמֹן: נַפְשׁוֹ גֶּחָלִים תְּלַהֵט וְלַהַב מִפִּיו יֵצֵא:

> 'His sneezing flashes for the light, his eyes are like eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning torches, sparks of fire leap forth. Out of his nostrils smoke goes forth, as of a boiling pot over a fire of reeds. His breath kindles coals, and a flame goes forth from his mouth.' (Job 41.10–13)

Leviathan is depicted here as a monster (perhaps originally a snake). The fire, attributed to his vision and speech organs—eyes, nostrils, and mouth—is frightening and dangerous. In both the Ugaritic and biblical worldviews, Leviathan is an associate of the Sea and the Abyss (Uehlinger 1999, 511–13; cf. Isa. 27.1).

The prototypical imagery of Leviathan is reminiscent of Humbaba—the giant monster defeated by Gilgamesh: cf. $^{d}$*ḫu-wa-wa* ⌜*ri-ig*⌝*-ma-šu a-bu-bu / pi-šu* $^{d}$*girrum*(GÌRA)*-ma na-pi-su mutum*

'Huwawa, his voice is the Deluge, his speech is fire, his breath is death' (Gilgamesh IV:197–98).[19] The flame from the mouth is a common simile in the Babylonian snake-incantation: *a-pa-šu {šu} mu-tum pišu na-ab-lum / li-ša-na-šu bi-ir-bi-ir-ru-um* 'its nostrils spell death; its mouth is flame, its forked tongue—radiance' (VS 17,4).[20] Flaming eyes and mouths of fire were attributed to gods and demons in Egyptian magical literature (Borghouts 1973). This imagery of demons continues into the world of Late Antiquity, appearing in Babylonian Jewish Aramaic incantations: נורא לביש ונורא מכסי שלהביתא דנורא נפקא מיפומיה 'angels who came to the presence of Shamash) are clad with fire and covered with fire, and a flame of fire comes out of their mouths' (Naveh and Shaked 1998, 202–3, bowl 13, lns 18, 21). The eyes of demons, on the other hand, can be scorched, flaming, and red (Ford 1999, 242, 264–66). The flame from the mouth is a common motif, further, in Coptic magical texts (Ford 1999, 213).

Strikingly, the closest parallels to the description of Yamm's envoys, as interpreted here, come in biblical וְעֵינָיו כְּלַפִּידֵי אֵשׁ 'and his eyes as flaming torches' (Dan. 10.6) and in the New Testament in Revelation: cf. Rev. 12 with the description of the dragon, and,

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[19] Quoted from George (2003, 201–2); cf. also the quotations in *CAD* (G 93), e.g., *šaptāšu ina šutabbuli* $^{d}$GIŠ.BAR *ittanpaḫ* 'when he moves his lips they emit fire' (Enuma eliš. I 96, cf. Lambert 2008, 39). See also Tallqvist (1938, 77).

[20] Quoted from Wasserman (2003, 40). For the parallel text, VAT 8363, cf. van Dijk (1969, 539–47). See also Lambert (1970) regarding the symbolism of fire as a hostile power; cf., e.g., Maqlû VI 127ff II, in Abusch (2015, 127ff.).

particularly, Rev. 19's depiction of the Rider on a white horse: οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ [ὡς] φλὸξ πυρός 'his eyes were as a flame of fire' (Rev. 19.12) καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ἐκπορεύεται ῥομφαία ὀξεῖα 'out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword' (Rev. 19.15) (Collins and Yarbro Collins 1993, 372).[21]

Altogether, Yamm's messengers are obscure figures in the epos of Baal; their function and attributes, therefore, are debated. In view of the present discussion, it does not seem plausible to represent the messengers as primordial fire deities. Their temporary fiery appearance could mean an intention to cause strong reverence, attract attention, or emphasise the urgency of the message. This interpretation is plausible, but it contradicts the most straightforward grammatical and stylistic evidence: the default meaning of the Gt-stem in the language of poetry is not patientive and anticausative, and the description of the mouth in the second half-verse is perfectly parallel to the focus on the eyes in the first half-verse, together contributing to the direct discourse framework. It makes better sense, then, to view Yamm's messengers as frightening demonic figures with flaming eyes and sword-like tongues.

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[21] On the parallelism to the Canaanite context, cf. Yarbro Collins (2001, 77). On the "sword of his mouth" in the context of apocalyptic literature, cf. Collins (1998, 277–79). For the wider Jewish context, cf. Bauckham (1993, 131, 212). On the wider Hellenistic background, cf. Gordon (1999, 399).

## 4.0. Conclusion

In this paper I have made a claim for the agentive and autobenefactive/intensifying interpretation of Gt *ʾmr* in *iṯt iṯtm yiṯmr ḥrb lṭšt [lš]nhm* (*KTU* 1.2 I 32), translating it 'like a flame, two flames each one looked around; the sharped sword is their tongue'.

This claim is based, first, on a linguistic argument: while the agentive autobenefactive usage is typical of the Gt-stem in Ugaritic poetic language, the patientive anticausative interpretation is rare, coinciding with an inanimate subject, and is attested in prose language.

I secondly made a stylistic and pragmatic argument: two parallel half-verses in ln. 32 refer to the facial organs of the messengers, flaming eyes and the sharpened tongue, foreshadowing the threatening and imprudent message.

Moreover, the examination of the literary and cultural context of poetic imagery brings out the conclusion that the messengers of Yamm were neither similar to primordial fire-gods nor appeared in the form of fire as a means of attracting attention or eliciting reverence. The sword-sharpened tongue and the burning eyes are typical of some divine—particularly monstrous—figures, and are to be interpreted as weapons that can frighten or strike, physically or verbally.

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# LOAN TRANSLATION OR INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT: THE FIGURA ETYMOLOGICA IN SEMITIC AND IN YIDDISH

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A perennial question in linguistics is the following: does the similarity of constructions in genetically related or even unrelated languages necessitate the assumption of a common origin in a source language with subsequent loan transfer (calque) to other languages, or is it equally legitimate to argue for the independent emergence of said construction? On the one hand, to start with the latter possibility, logical commonalities across languages allow for the independent and simultaneous emergence of linguistic phenomena. In this spirit, Fleischer (2008, 257) cites Lass (1997, 201), who argues that is always preferable to look for an internal autochthonous explanation for a linguistic phenomenon, unless there is compelling evidence to take into account foreign influence. On the other hand, it is uncontested that whole constructions and phrases can be aptly transferred from language to language (cf. Thomason and Kaufman 1988). Contemporary German, for instance, abounds with Anglicisms, e.g., *es macht Sinn* 'it is reasonable' < *it makes sense*.

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A case in point is the *figura etymologica*, more precisely, the tautological infinitive, well-known across Semitic, in Arabic also referred to as *mafʿūl muṭlaq*.[1] While the latter term, *mafʿūl muṭlaq*, is restricted to the combination of a finite verb with the cognate *maṣdar* in the accusative (*naṣb*), corresponding to the combination of the infinitive absolute with a cognate active or passive finite verb (or vice versa) in Biblical Hebrew (also labelled 'tautological infinitive'), the term *figura etymologica*, or *paronomasia*, is used in a broader sense, encompassing combinations of cognate words, such as in the Hebrew annexation *šīr haš-šīrīm* '(the) song of songs' (i.e., 'the especially beautiful song'), the Gəʿəz annexation *nəgusä nägäst* '(the) king of kings' (an honorific for Ethiopian emperors), and Arabic constructions of the type *qāla qāʾilun* 'somebody ('a saying one') said' or *ṣarrara-hū ṣuraran* 'he wrapped it in packages' (cf. notably Diem 2007, 316ff. for the further development and reception of Reckendorf's concept of paronomasia in Arabic and Semitic linguistics). Other syntactic possibilities include, e.g., phrases like Gothic *haurnjans haurnjandans* 'horns hornblowing' (cf. Stutz 1966, 33ff.; for further Gothic examples cf. Quak 2020, 47). As Goldenberg (1971, 36) plausibly argues, the tautological infinitive, in contrast to the just mentioned cognate annexations, does not necessarily convey a notion of intensity, but may have other discourse functions. Of course, it may also simply an be due to 'syntax translation' (i.e., calque). Here are a few examples from the classical (varieties of) Semitic languages:

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[1] Goldenberg (1971, 482) sees different constructions at work here, but that does not matter for the viewpoint and purposes of this paper.

Akkadian (von Soden 1995, § 150a)

(1) *ḫadûm-ma hadi*
'he is very glad'

(2) *alākum-ma ula nittalak*
'we did not go at all'

Classical Arabic (Reckendorf 1909, 102)

(3) *qad futilat fatlan*
'it (F) was firmly twisted'

(4) *tubbirū tatbīran*
'they were completely broken'

Biblical Hebrew (Reckendorf 1909, 102)

(5) *gunnōḇ gunnaḇtī*
'indeed I was kidnapped' (Gen. 40.15)

Syriac (Reckendorf 1909, 102)

(6) *meḡbā gəḇe (h)wā*
'he was chosen'

Modern Semitic features the same construction, as well. In Israeli Hebrew, the construction is fairly productive (though, unlike in Biblical Hebrew) with the infinitive construct or verbal noun), e.g.,

Israeli Hebrew (Pereltsvaig 2002, 109)

(7) *Dani xiyex xiyux sameax.*
'Danny smile a happy smile.'

Examples from Arabic dialects, Maltese, and Ethio-Semitic Amharic, consisting of a finite verb form and the cognate *maṣdar*, include:

Maltese (Maas 2005, 416)

(8) *yoħroġ ħruġ*
'he goes out a lot'

Moroccan Arabic (Maas 2005, 419)

(9) *ka-išrib šrib*
'he drinks a lot'

Amharic (Goldenberg 1971, 40)

(10) *mämṭat-əss* *mäṭṭo-bb-əññ*
come.INF-DM come.CVB-3SG.M-BENEF-1SG
'as to coming, he had come to me'

This topic has been researched at depth within Semitic (starting with Reckendorf 1909) and beyond (starting with Pott 1862). Besides Semitic, Goldenberg (1971, 36) mentions Baltic, Slavic, Romance, and German dialects (Indo-European), as well as Hungarian (Finno-Ugric), and Turkish (Ural-Altaic). Shisha-Halevy (1990) has investigated this construction in Coptic. Here are relevant examples from Indo-European languages:

Lithuanian (Fleischer 2008, 256)

(11) *girdėti* *girdėjau,* *laiko* *neturėjau*
hear.INF hear.PST.1SG time NEG.have.PST.1SG
'I did hear it, but didn't have time.'

Russian (Fleischer 2008, 257)

(12) *pet'* *ja* *bol'še* *ne* *poju,* *ja* *uže*
sing.INF 1SG more NEG sing.PRS.1SG 1SG already
*bol'še* *ne* *mogu*
more NEG can.PRS.1SG
'I no longer sing, I can't anymore.'

Italian (Goldenberg 1971, 37)

(13) *Dispiacere non mi dispiacete*
displease.INF NEG 1SG.OBJ displease.PRS.2PL
'You (PL) don't displease me.'

Northern Bavarian (Fleischer 2008, 249)

(14) *siŋə siŋ i ni mɒ, kon i*
sing.INF sing.PRS.1SG 1SG NEG more can.PRS.1SG 1SG
*a: ni mɒ*
also NEG more
'I no longer sing, I just can't anymore.'

The same construction also occurs with modal verbs in Bavarian and beyond, often with a contrastive connotation, e.g.,

(15) *Ja kina ko' ma' scho, aba derfa derf*
yes can.INF can.IPF.3SG one affirm but may.INF may.IPFV.3SG
*ma' net*
one NEG
'One can/has the ability/possibility to [do it], but one may not [legally do it].' (Fleischer 2008, 250)

Both Goldenberg (1971) and Fleischer (2008) also cite examples close to the standard language, though they are associated with special regions, e.g.,

(16) *Schlafen schlief ich nicht, …*
sleep.INF sleep.PRET.1SG 1SG NEG
'I (actually) did not sleep, … (Hofmann 1930, 68ff., apud Goldenberg 1971, 38)

(17) *Schaden schadt ihm das nichts.*
damage.INF damage.PRS.3SG 3SG.M.DAT PRON.3SG.NT nothing
'That doesn't hurt him.' (Fleischer 200, 245)

Modern English features the inner-object construction as well, also in colloquial registers. In Stanley Kubrick's film *Full Metal Jacket*, one soldier provokes another soldier by asking him: "You talk the talk. Do you walk the walk?"

The same holds for a number of other 'classical' languages, cf. constructions such as Latin *vitam vivere* 'to live a life' or Greek πόλεμον πόλεμίζειν 'to fight a battle' (cf. Boldt 2022, 73).

What is less clear and more controversial is the question as to whether Jewish languages, notably Yiddish, which feature this phenomenon as well, owe the *figura etymologica* (here the tautological infinitive) to Semitic (mainly Hebrew), or have developed this stylistic figure of speech autochthonously.

The pros and cons of various answers to this question will be addressed in the following. Jewish languages in the context of Semitic have always been a key focus in Geoffrey Khan's research, and it is in this spirit that this paper is offered on the occasion of Geoffrey's 67th birthday.

## 1.0. Discussion

### 1.1. Arguments for Loan Translation

While Bible translations constitute a literary genre *sui generis*, on the one hand, they are also apt to have an impact on the development of literary language in general, as was the case, for instance, with the Saxonian *Kanzleisprache* under the influence of Luther's Bible translation. There is no denying that the Hebrew Bible has had considerable stylistic impact on European languages, as translations, starting with the Septuagint (cf., e.g.,

Thackeray 1908; Shishkin 2018), have attempted to emulate certain syntactic features, among them the *figura etymologica*.

The tautological infinitive (or inner object or *figura etymologica*), a construction which may (but need not) stress the activity in question, is an obvious case in point here. The Biblical Hebrew *locus classicus* for this construction (infinitive absolute + finite verb) may be illustrated with the following:

(18) הֲמָלֹךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ אִם־מָשׁוֹל תִּמְשֹׁל בָּנוּ

| *hă-mā̆lōḵ* | *timlōḵ* | *ʿālē-nū* | *ʾim* | *mā̆šōl* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| INT-reign.INF.ABS | reign.IPFV.2MSG | upon-1PL | if | rule.INF.ABS |

*timšōl*

rule.IPFV.2MSG

‘Do you want to be king over us or rule over us?’ (Gen. 37.8); ‘Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?’ (KJV)

Here, no attempt is made in the translations to emulate the tautological infinitive. The King James translation highlights the notion of intensity, though (twice using *indeed*).

In a different case, Ps. 68.19, which employs the cognate nominal object *šɛḇī* ‘captivity’ rather than an infinitive absolute, the translations do capture this circumstance (cf. Ruge 2015, 437ff.):

(19) שָׁבִיתָ שֶּׁבִי

| *šā̆ḇīṯā̆* | *Šɛḇī* |
|---|---|
| catch.PF.2MSG | captivity |

‘Thou hast led captivity captive’ (Ps. 68.19); ‘vnd hast das gefengnis gefangen’ (Luther)

Ruge subsequently argues that in German the construction was already on the retreat in Luther's time and that Luther deliberately chose to imitate Semitic style. This line of argumentation indeed supports the notion of linguistic transfer.

The influence of the *figura etymologica* in biblical passages on translations, while clearly attested, is nevertheless debated. It is true that, for instance, the *figura etymologica* in Song 1.2 is reflected in both English and French translations of the passage:

(20) יִשָּׁקֵ֥נִי מִנְּשִׁיקׇ֖ות פִּ֑יהוּ

*yiššåqē-nī* *min-nəšīqōṯ* *pī-hū*

kiss.JUSS.3MSGM-1SG.OBJ from-kiss.PL.CS mouth-3SG.M

'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth'; 'qu'il me baise avec les baisers de sa bouche'

It was also rendered literally by the Septuagint, as well as other European translations.

Φιλησάτω με ἀπὸ φιλημάτων στόματος αὐτοῦ (cf. Aslanov 2001, 239)

The same holds for the true tautological infinitive in Josh. 17.13, which is rendered as such in the Septuagint, but not in Europeans translations:

(21) וְהוֹרֵ֥שׁ לֹ֖א הוֹרִישׁוּ

*wə-hōrēš* *lō* *hōrīšū*

and-expel.INF.ABS NEG expel.PF.3MPL

ἐξολεθρεῦσαι δὲ αὐτοὺς οὐκ ἐξωλέθρευσαν

'but [they] did not utterly drive them out' (cf. Hofmann 1930, 82)

However, in most other cases such a rendition is not found (cf. again Aslanov 2001; for statistical observations in this context cf. Shsishkin 2018).

In this context a brief excursus on the history of German Qurʾān translations is useful. In the nineteenth century, the German scholar and poet Friedrich Rückert emulated the *figura etymologica* (here *mafʿūl muṭlaq*) in his translation of parts of the Qurʾān. Vv. 9 and 10 of Sūrat aṭ-Ṭūr are a case in point:

(22) يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا

*yawma* *tamūru* *s-samāʾu*

day.ACC.CS to_move_back_and_forth.IPFV.3FSG DEF-heaven

*mawran*

to_move_back_and_forth.MAṢDAR.ACC

‘Am Tage, da der Himmel wankt und schwankt’ (Sūrat aṭ-Ṭūr 9, Bobzin); ‘Wenn wank die Himmel wanken’ (Rückert 2000); ‘On the Day when the heaven will shake with a dreadful shaking’

(23) وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا

*wa-tasīru* *l-ǧibālu* *sayran*

and-travel.IPFV.3FSG DEF-mountain.PL travel.MAṢDAR.ACC

‘und die Berge sich eilends in Bewegung setzen’ (Sūrat aṭ-Ṭūr 10, Bobzin 2010); ‘Und schwank die Berge schwanken’ (Rückert 2000); ‘And the mountains will move away with a (horrible) movement’

While one might consider these translations poetic, Reckendorf (1909, vii) argues that they attribute too much weight to the *figura etymologica* in the original, where these constructions are far

less marked than in European translations (cf. the caveat formulated by Goldenberg cited above).

Yiddish frequently features this construction. Examples include the following:

(24) קומען קומט ער ניט

*kumen kumt er nit*

come.INF come.PRS.3SG 3SG NEG

'he does not come' (cf. Fleischer 2014, 155)

(25) טראָגן טראָג איך מיין אַלטן מאַנטל

*trogn trog ikh mayn altn mantl*

wear.INF wear.PRS.3SG 1SG 1SG.POSS old.ACC coat

'I wear my old coat a lot'

(26) אויפֿהערן האָט די גבירה שוין ניט אויפֿגעהערט צו לאַכן

*oyfhern hot di gvire shoyn nit oyfgehert*

stop.INF have.PRS.3SG DEF.F lady just NEG stop.PPP

*tsu lakhn*

to laugh.INF

'the lady just wouldn't stop laughing' (cf. Mark 1978)

Still, Fleischer (2014, 155) ponders arguments for a Slavic origin of the construction in Yiddish, mainly, because he does not see synchronic attestation of the construction in contact regions relevant to the emergence and further development in Yiddish. In contrast, Goldenberg (1971) points to the occurrence of this construction in *both* German registers and Yiddish. The construction is also found in Judezmo, e.g., *vinir no vino* 'he didn't come' (David Bunis, written communication). Goldenberg (1971, 39) cites several Jewish authors, who argued for a Hebrew origin of this construction, notably Gerzon (1902, 76), Mieses (1915, 103),

and Mark (apud Goldenberg 1971, 39), the last of whom pointedly uses the very construction to express the fact:

(27) קומן קומט ער פון לושן קודש אָבר ער האָט טיף אַרײַנגעדרונגען אין דער שפראַך פון עמך אין אַלע דיאַלעקטן פון ייִדיש

*kumen kumt er fon loshn qoydesh, aber er*
come.INF come.PRS.3SG 3MSG from language holy but 3MSG
*hot tif arayngedrungen in der shprakh fun*
have.PRS.3SG deep enter.PPP in DEF.F.DAT language of
*am-kho*[2] *in ale dialektn fun yidish*
common.people in all dialect.PL of Yiddish
'It [the tautological infinitive, LE] comes from Hebrew ('the holy language'), but is has deeply permeated the speech of the common [Jewish] people in all dialects of Yiddish.'

At any rate, there is no doubt that the tautological infinitive is a frequent stylistic feature in Yiddish (cf., e.g., Birnbaum 1918, 66, and Finkin 2021).

## 1.2. Arguments for Autochthonous Development in Yiddish

When one investigates the *figura etymologica* from a typological perspective, as Maas (2015) has done, going all the way back to Pott (1862), this construction does not strike one in any way as unusual. Rather it appears as something to be expected or at least as something belonging to the natural inventory of stylistic variants available. Ruge (2015) entitles his article about the *figura*

[2] The word *amkho* 'the common [Jewish] people' derives from Hebrew עַמְּךָ *ʿammə̱ḵå̄* or עַמֶּךָ *ʿammɛ̱ḵå̄* 'your people'.

*etymologica* ‘*einen slac slân…*’ (‘to beat a beat’), certainly not under the influence of the Arabic *mafʿūl muṭlaq* construction *ḍaraba ḍarban*, as one might assume from a Semiticist perspective, but simply since this construction is typical of Middle High German (and earlier) phraseology. Indeed, his first quotation is from the *Nibelungenlied* (Ruge 2015, 413):

(28) *Der helt dô spranc dar nâher und*
DEF.M hero then jump.PST.3SG there closer and
*sluoc im einen slac.*
hit.PST.3SG 3SG.DAT INDEF.M.ACC hit
‘The hero then jumped closer and beat him a beat (i.e., hit him hard).’

A further quotation is the following (Ruge 2015, 421):

(29) *Vnd sluc im slac vber slac.*
and hit.PST.3SG 3SG.DAT hit over hit
‘And he hit him hit after hit (i.e., repeatedly).’

In modern Standard German, such examples only seem to be acceptable in a poetic context. In contrast to Middle High German, passivisation, however, is no longer possible, as was still the case in Middle High German (Ruge 2015, 417):

(30) *Doch wart von im der slac geslagen.*
however become.PST.3SG from 3SG.DAT DEF.M hit hit.PPP
‘However, the hit was hit by him.’

Boldt (2022, 73ff.) offers an excellent overview from a broader Germanic perspective. Old Norse examples are the following:

(31) *Sva* *scal* *gerða* *þan* *garð*
like_this shall.PRS.3SG set_up_a_fence.INF DEM.M fence
'One should set up this fence like this'

(32) *Ef* *maðr* *rœnir* *mann* *hanðrani*
if someone rob.PRS.3SG man hand.robbing
'If someone robs a man by hand' (Boldt 2022, 74)

Certain phrases/collocations are specific to individual languages, e.g., Old High German *fruma frūmenti* 'benefit [I] provide' (cf. Boldt 2022, 75), others are attested across Germanic, e.g., 'to repent', *büßen* in modern German, surfaces as Old Norse *bøta bót* 'to repent repentance', as Old English *bōt gebētan* 'repentance to repent', and as Old Frisian *bōte bēta* 'repentance to repent' (Boldt 2022, 76). 'To recompense', *entgelten* in modern German, surfaces as Old Norse *gjalda gjald* 'to recompense compensation', Old English *āngild forgildan* 'compensation to recompense', Old Frisian *jelda mith jelde(m)* 'to recompense with compensation', and Old High German *weragelt geltan* 'compensation to recompense' (Boldt 2022, 77; for Old Frisian cf. notably Szadrowsky 1962).

Beyond Germanic, Celtic (Old Irish) also features copious examples (cf. Stüber 2012). In broader Indo-European perspective, one can point to examples such as 'to give a gift', surfacing in Latin as *dōnum dedit*, in Vedic as *dānam dā-*, and in Greek as δῶρον διδόναι, according to Euler (1982) reconstructible as Proto-Indo-European *dōnom dō-*, in more recent transcription **deh₃nom deh₃-* (cf. Boldt 2022, 76).

Fleischer (2008), in an overview of German dialectal as well as Balto-Slavic examples, makes an especially strong case for

the independent emergence of the *figura etymologica* in modern German dialects. As regards Yiddish (2008, 261ff.), he carefully weighs the theoretical possibility of a Hebrew adstrate, as he argues that the precursors of the modern German dialects that still feature this construction played no role in the development of Yiddish, due to lack of direct contact. Unlike Ruge (2015), he does not consider Middle High German, let alone older evidence. Already Hofmann (1930, 81ff.) clearly supports an autochthonous origin of the *figura etymologica* in both Balto-Slavic and German (dialects) (cf. also Goldenberg 1971, 39 fn. 9; ff. also Meyer-Lübke 1903).

Interestingly, the following text segment, often referred to as the oldest extant coherent example of Yiddish, features precisely this construction:

(33) גוט טַק אִים בְּטַגְּא שְׁ וַיר דִּיש מַחֲזוֹר אִין בֵּיתּ הַכְּנֶסֶתּ טְרַגְּא

| *gut* | *tak* | *im* | *betage* | *s'waer* | *dis* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| good | day | 3SG.M.DAT | shine.3SG.PRS.CONJ | REL | DEM.NT |

| *maḥăzor* | *in* | *beyṭ* | *ha-kneseṭ* | *trage* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| prayer.book$^{H}$ | in | house.CS$^{H}$ | DEF-assembly$^{H}$ | carry.3SG.PRS |

'May a good day come to him who carries this prayer book into the synagogue.'

The phrase (*figura etymologica*) *tak betage* is also attested in Middle High German. Ruge (2015, 416) cites the following example:

(34)

| *owê,* | *daz* | *ie* | *der* | *tac* | *betaget* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| woe | comp | some_time | DEF.M | day | become_day.PRS.3SG |

'Woe, that some time the day will come'

## 2.0. Conclusion

As for the *figura etymologica* in European languages, Fleischer (2008, 250–54) supposes topicalisation as the crucial motive. What he labels "*Infinitivverdopplung*" thus corresponds to *tun*-phrases, such as the following:

(35) *Schreiben* *tue* *ich,* *nicht* *lesen*
write.INF do.PRS.1SG 1SG NEG read.INF
'I am writing, not reading'

The point here is that such phrases semantically match comparable phrases with the tautological infinitive, *schreiben schreibe ich nicht,….* The only difference can be seen in the focus/contrast that the *tun*-construction offers, as opposed to the mere reinforcement ("*Dopplung*") of the tautological infinitive (keeping in mind that reinforcement is not the only function of that construction). The functional character of this analysis makes the independent emergence of such constructions highly plausible. What is more, inner objects are typologically nothing unusual (cf., e.g., Nakajma 2006 and Fritz and Meier-Brügger 2021, 270).

At any rate, we are not faced with a 'us versus them' scenario here, as far as the religious affiliation of the involved scholars is concerned. Rather, in the sense of Beider (2015, 10), one can speak of a contrast between a 'Jewish languages perspective' and a 'Germanic linguistics perspective', which need not, however, be divided along a Jewish/non-Jewish line, as the example of Goldenberg (1971) amply demonstrates. As I have argued (Edzard 2021), a combination or synthesis of these approaches is both feasible and meaningful.

Let us lastly consider the situation in Modern Hebrew. Interestingly enough, a column (by 'Philologus') in the *Forward* online newspaper, 'To Hurt It Can't Hurt' (https://forward.com/news/3213/to-hurt-it-can-e2-80-99t-hurt/, 1 April 2005), proposes that the productivity of the tautological infinitive in Modern Hebrew is due to Yiddish influence, rather than inheritance from older stages of Hebrew. The first examples cited in this column correspond to the German example above, *Schaden schadt ihm das nichts* 'that won't hurt him':

(36) Biblical Hebrew tautological infinite construction > *Schaden schadt ihm das nichts* >
להזיק זה לא יזיק
*le-haziq* *ze* *lo* *yaziq*
to-damage.INF DEM.M NEG damage.IPFV.3MSG
'that won't hurt' (Philologos 2005)

Truly enough, this construction ceased to be productive in stages of post-biblical Hebrew, and nowadays, if any infinitive is used in such cases, it is the 'normal' infinitive construct, not the Biblical Hebrew infinitive absolute, e.g., *la-lexet ʾani ʾelex* 'I will certainly go', as opposed to Biblical Hebrew *hă̄lōḵ ʾēlēḵ*. The latter seems to be relegated to a high stylistic register (cf. Schwarzwald 1989; for the historical stage cf. Waltke and O'Connor 1990, 584–88; see also Goldenberg 1971, 63–73; Kim 2009; and Shemesh-Raiskin 2014). If this is true, we are observing what in sociology is called a 'pizza effect' i.e., that a phenomenon, after having lost importance in its original environment, gains importance in a foreign context and is then re-imported to its original environment with higher prestige.

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# ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF SACRED NAMES

*Simon Hopkins*

Sensitivity to sacred names is a universal phenomenon, reflected in various ways and to different degrees. In many cultures explicit mention of the deity is typically avoided, either partially or completely. Sometimes the divine name is sidestepped altogether by using a secular substitute, a neutral circumlocution, or a harmless epithet. These substitutes tend to acquire a new sanctity of their own and in due course may themselves make way for further replacements. Another device is to retain the divine name itself, but in an indirect form effected by introducing an intentional change, visible in orthography and often audible in pronunciation. By such means a respectful distance is created between the human and the divine. All this belongs to the "mysticism of language" (Jespersen)—holiness, uncleanness, taboo, euphemism, superstition, magic, etiquette, etc.—and the many aspects of the subject have generated a large linguistic, ethnographic, palaeographic, and halakhic literature. It is this reverential awe of the divine name and its substitutes (*šemot* 'names') that in Jewish tradition led to the institution of *geniza*.[1] Here, too,

[1] For Biblical names and epithets of God see Maimonides, *Guide*, Book I, chs 61ff.

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in the broader scheme of things, belong *al-ʾasmāʾ al-ḥusnā* ‘the most beautiful names (of God)’ of Islamic tradition, the *asmāt* ‘names’ used by the Ethiopian sorcerer,[2] and the *nomina barbara* of Greek magical papyri, Gnostic amulets, Aramaic magic bowls, etc.

## 1.0. The Tetragrammaton, *El(ohim)*, G-d, etc.

The ancient Hebrew reluctance to pronounce the name of the Deity יהוה *yhwh* is well known. The times and places in which, and by whom, the Ineffable Name was permitted to be pronounced became more and more confined, ultimately restricted to priestly circles and Temple ritual, in particular, the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. In Jewish tradition utterance of the Tetragrammaton, השם בן/בעל ארבע אותיות *ha-šem ben/baʿal ʾarbaʿ ʾotiyot* ‘the name with four letters’ was avoided by substituting the pronunciations of אֲדֹנָי *ʾăḏōnɑ̊́y* ‘my Lord’ (b. Pesaḥim 50a; b. Qiddushin 71a) or, according to circumstances, אֱלֹהִים *ʾĕlōhīm* ‘God’. This practice is reflected in the technical term שם המפורש *šem hameforaš*, viz. ‘the name which has to be translated (i.e., substituted)’.[3] According to the prescribed substitution, the letters יהוה

[2] Known in Amharic as *asmāt-ām* ~ *asmāt-aññā* ‘name man’, i.e., equivalent to the Hebrew בעל שם *baʿal šem*. Practically synonymous are the *qālāt* ‘words’ of the Ethiopian *qālātaññā* magician.

[3] “Der beim Lesen zu ‘übersetzende’, d.h. durch etwas anderes zu ersetzende Name” (Polotsky 1932, 274, 283 fn. 1 = Polotsky 1971, 632, 641 fn. 1).

*yhwh* in the Hebrew Bible are vocalised יְהוָֹה or יֱהוִֹה. The *qere perpetuum* יְהוָֹה, usually vocalised with initial *shewa*,[4] has resulted in the modern spelling pronunciation 'Jehovah', which originated—and still persists—in certain Christian circles. The Samaritans solved the problem in a different way, by reading יהוה *yhwh* as *šēmå*, i.e., 'the Name' par excellence (Tal 2000, I:337, II:907, and the references there). This appears in Jewish tradition as ה' (with apostrophe, usually not written out in full = הַשֵּׁם, cf. Deut. 28.58). A common alternative is ד', a notation of uncertain origin. In current Jewish oral practice, the substitute for the Ineffable Name is *ʾadonay* in prayer, while *ha-šem* is preferred in colloquial Hebrew speech: ברוך אתה אדני *baruḵ ʾata ʾadonay* 'blessed are you, Lord' in a ritual context versus ברוך ה' *baruḵ ha-šem* 'blessed be the name' in conversation.[5] In Italian tradition the substitute for the Tetragrammaton is *Domedet* (and variants) written דומדת (*sic*, with ת) (Ryzhik 2021, 516 fn. 67, 524, 538, 546).

The customary square script of the Hebrew Bible makes no graphic distinction between the letters *y*, *h*, and *w* of *yhwh* and the same letters used in any other word. This is not so in the Dead Sea Scrolls, where sensitivity to the divine name was given graphic expression. Among the Qumran sectarians the four letters of the Tetragrammaton were often written, in contrast to the main body of the text, in palaeo-Hebrew script: 𐤉𐤄𐤅𐤄. The same

[4] The reason for the irregular shewa simplex is unclear (Ewald 1870, 96) and in Jewish circles was sometimes disapproved (Reif 1979, 8–9).

[5] For the distinction between prayer and daily speech, cf. below fns 10 and 11.

orthographic conservatism was continued in certain Greek transmissions of the scriptures, in which the Tetragrammaton *yhwh* appears in the (almost certainly deliberate) transformation as ΡΕΡΕ (*yhyh*) or πιπι,[6] whence it subsequently entered Syriac in the forms ܝܗܝ or ܝܘܝ.[7]

For superstitious reasons it is the nature of taboos to be extended beyond their original context and applied ever more rigorously. Such a taboo on writing the Tetragrammaton (or—just to be on the safe side—anything resembling it) has been identified as responsible for the form לֶהֱוֵא *lɛḥĕwē* in Biblical Aramaic, the imperfect of *hwy*, for which one would have expected *יְהֱוֵא. Although various linguistic arguments have been advanced in justification of the anomalous להוא, it seems fairly clear that in certain circles at least the regular form יהוא aroused pious scruples and was avoided by using the *l* prefix in preference to the sensitive *y(hwʾ)*.[8]

In post-biblical Hebrew, as is well known, the Jewish Deity is often referred to by descriptive or circumlocutionary epithets: הקדוש ברוך הוא *ha-qadoš baruḵ hu* ‘the holy one blessed be he’ (= הקב"ה), ריבונו של עולם *ribono šel ʿolam* ‘master of the universe’, המקום *ha-maqom* ‘the place’, רחמנא *raḥmana* ‘merciful’, etc. Beside theonyms such as these, reverence for the Divine Name *yhwh*, שם הוי(")ה, together with its sacred substitutes, has generated a large

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[6] The Greek ideogram πιπι was read κύριος ‘Lord’, in accordance with the LXX rendering of יהוה (Burkitt 1897,16; Taylor 1900, 26).

[7] For full details of this and other methods of writing the Tetragrammaton in the scrolls see Tov (2004, chs. 5d, 6b[2], and Appendix 5C).

[8] The taboo factor is not favoured by Fassberg (2015).

variety of deliberate graphic and phonetic alterations. From ancient to modern times, Jewish practice has found many creative solutions to the difficulty of writing and pronouncing the Divine Name; in cabbalistic circles especially this theme became very highly developed, sophisticated in both method and graphic design. A comprehensive chronological survey of the subject, with many examples and references to further literature, has been given by Sh. Sharvit (2008; see also, e.g., Steinschneider 1895–1896; Wieder 1962, 242–43 fn. 3.).

A common expedient to avoid explicit *ad literam* mention of the Tetragrammaton (i.e., השם באותיותיו *ha-šem be-ʾotiyotav* 'the name with its letters', השם ככתבו *ha-šem ki-ḵtavo* 'the name according to its writing') is the introduction of a change in the orthography.[9] A vast number of variations is attested: י, יי, ייי, יייי, …, יהוד, ידוד, י-ה-ו-ה, etc. (further possibilities in Dalman 1905, 53 bottom). Theophoric proper names may be rendered inoffensive by an adjustment in the spelling, e.g., the sequence יהו- in the name 'Elijah' is avoided by writing אליאו instead of אליהו (Cohen 1925, 199, with reference to twentieth-century Singapore, refecting the practice of Baghdad). The orthographical taboo is extended to any combination of letters which happens to occur in the Tetragrammaton, even when the Deity is not intended at all, e.g., יאודים instead of יהודים 'Jews' (Sabar 1991, 32 fn. 56); the same problem in the word for 'Jews' = اليهود was solved in the Yemen by writing יזוד, ירוד, יאוד, or יוד (Piamenta 1990–1991, 535, 536, 538). Note also the preference in rabbinical Judezmo for

[9] Cf. the alterations in the oath 'substitutes' (כינויים) in m. Nedarim 1.2.

final ייא- instead of ייה- (Bunis 2021, 430). Here belongs the writing of the numerals 15 and 16 indirectly as טו, i.e., 9 + 6, and טז, i.e., 9 +7, instead of יה, i.e., 10 + 5, and יו, i.e., 10 + 6, respectively. In many communities the Tetragrammaton substitute *ʾadonay* has itself become taboo and the name changed in various ways: *aḍuṇay*, *aḍoḇay*, *aḍubayṣ*, *aḍoqay* (Tunisia) (Henshke 2007, 174; further cases in Maman 2019, 35–36). Not all of such variations met with general acceptance; the still-common *adoshem*[10] has been explicitly singled out in halakhic literature for disapproval (*Qiṣṣur Šulḥan ʿAruḵ*, ed. Ganzfried, §6.3, end).

The spelling of אלהים *ʾelohim* was altered by elongating the left upright of the ה of אלהים into אלקים and pronouncing the result accordingly as *ʾelokim*.[11] Alternatively, the same left upright of the letter ה may be (shortened and then) cancelled, producing אלדים and giving rise to the matching pronunciation *ʾelodim*. Spellings with ק are found in Jewish Neo-Aramaic tradition, where *ʾilāha* 'God', the word used in the spoken language, is written both directly with *h*—אלאהא, אי(א)לה—and obliquely with *q*—אילאקא, א(י)לקא (Sabar 1984, 249; 1991, 32).[12] The ק of אלקים, doubtless helped by association with קדוש *qadoš* 'holy', may be transferred to the word אֵל *ʾel* 'God', written קל and pronounced

[10] "אדושם ʾad$^{i}$šem 'Aussprache des Gottesnamens außerhalb des Betens'" (Birnbaum 1922, 51).

[11] "אלקים ʾełoikim, wie es ausserhalb des Gebetes im hebräischen Text ausgesprochen wird" (Birnbaum 1922, 21).

[12] The abbreviation ה is also used for 'God': ה'ד stands for אליאה ד *ʾilāhə-d* 'God of…' (Sabar 1984, 51:22).

*kel* (Wieder 1962, 242 fn. 3), e.g., בית קל ‘Bet Kel’ instead of the place name בית אל ‘Bethel’ (Sarfatti 2001, 269).[13] This sacred ק has found its way into the Tetragrammaton יקוק and also into ה' צבקות (< צבאות) ‘the Lord of Hosts’. An unusual sensitivity to אל is reflected in an early Judaeo-Arabic translation of the Pentateuch. In this manuscript, proper names ending in -אֵל are not reproduced as they stand in the Hebrew text, but slightly altered so as to avoid writing אל at the end of the word. Thus, בְּתוּאֵל *bəṯūʾēl* ‘Bethuel’ (Gen. 24.47) and בֵּית־אֵל *bēṯ-ʾēl* ‘Bethel’ (Gen. 35.3) are translated בתוייל and ביתיל, respectively.[14] Another solution to such words, attested in modern times, but perhaps of much earlier origin, is to hyphenate the troublesome ending, e.g., שמוא-ל, etc. (Sharvit 2008, 612–13).

In early Judaeo-Arabic texts, alongside the spelling אללה = الله, it is common to find the ligature לא (as opposed to אל) followed by a sign which usually resembles a large *qamets*: ⟨לא⟩, but sometimes looks more like a *dalet* (Blau and Hopkins 2017, 28 and the references there). This sign represents the *qamets* of אדנָי; the *dalet*-like symbol may derive from the ד of אדני or אלדים. The ligature לא followed by a large *qamets*-like symbol also occurs in Aramaic Geniza MSS, in which repeated ⟨ר⟩ substitutes for the last two

[13] A Google search for תודה לקל or ‘toda lakel’ (= תודה לאל ‘thank God!’) produces several results. This *kel* can be heard in hasidic songs, e.g., those sung by Avraham Fried.

[14] Further leaves of this MS have been published in Butbul and Hopkins (2024, 26 fn. 89). In the light of the translator’s clear avoidance of -אֵל *-ēl* at the end of proper names, the footnote in Blau and Hopkins (2017, 290) should be deleted.

letters of אלהא, e.g., בשם ממריה דיי אלהא דשמייה ‘in the name of the *memra* of the Lord God of heaven” (Palestinian Targum to Gen. 24.3) (Klein 1986, I:35, II:13, where the sign has been mistaken for and edited as a regular ד). The ligature אֵ alone (with no following symbol) is found in Neo-Aramaic tradition (Sabar 1976, xliv; 1991, 32). In old Karaite texts *qamets* is often added beneath the writing of ‘God’: יְ or, in Arabic translation, اللّٰه. These Karaite texts also use special symbols in order to indicate the name of God (Hoerning 1889, 22, 29, 39; Khan 1990, 186, Index s.v. ‘Tetragrammaton’); these symbols probably represent stylised monograms of اللّٰه. Some early Yiddish sources write the word *Gott* with two supralinear dots: גּוֹט (Grünbaum 1882, 290).

There is nothing unusual in all of this. The name of God is likely to receive a special orthography or pronunciation in many cultures. This word, when referring to the Supreme Deity of the monotheistic religions, is written in English with an initial capital *G*. This is in contrast to polytheistic pagan ‘gods’, for which lowercase *g* is deemed more appropriate.[15] Such reverential capitalisation may be extended to pronouns; ‘Him’, ‘His’, etc. with reference to God and Jesus (as opposed to secular ‘him’, ‘his’, etc.) are very frequent in English, though usage varies considerably according to time, place, religious affiliation, and personal taste. With reference to Muḥammad, the practice has been imitated by Muslims writing in English. In the English-speaking world ‘G-d’ has become rather common, particularly among Jewish writers;

[15] Cf., too, cases such as “For their rock *is* not as our Rock” (Deut. 32.31 AV).

the word intended is perfectly obvious, even explicit, but the Divine name is not actually spelled out and thus no transgression committed. Another way of creating distance and avoiding direct mention is to introduce a deliberate disguise in pronunciation: Holy Cow, Gock, Gosh, Golly, by Gum, Great Scott, etc. or to omit mention of the Divinity altogether as 'Oh My (scil. G-d)!'. Such things are well known.

To return to Hebrew and Semitic tradition, the Tetragrammaton substitute *ʾăḏōnā́y* is in the Hebrew Bible consistently and deliberately vocalised with *qamets* in the final syllable: אדנָי.[16] In Karaite transcriptions the word is written اذونَای, i.e., *plene* with *ʾalif* and often vocalised with *qamets* (Khan 1990, 135, 149, 169). This *qamets* is special, for the combination of אֲדֹנִים *ʾăḏōnīm*, the plural (*excellentiae*, *majestatis*) of אָדוֹן *ʾā́ḏōn* 'lord, master', with the standard 1CSG pronominal suffix would be expected to yield אֲדֹנַי *ʾăḏōnay* with *pataḥ*. Biblical punctuation, however, consistently distinguishes between secular אֲדֹנַי *ʾăḏōnay* 'my lords (PL)' (Gen. 19.2) with *pataḥ* and sacred אֲדֹנָי *ʾăḏōnā́y* 'my Lord (SG)' with *qamets*. This is the reason that Ibn Ezra, Kimḥi, and others felt compelled to explain the vocalisation with *qamets* of אֲדֹנָי *ʾăḏōnā́y* in Gen. 19.18—not because it refers to the deity, but because this profane application of the word stands in pause.[17] The

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[16] Notable, too, are vocalisations after monosyllabic prefixes of the type ויהוה, to be read וַאדנָי *w-aḏōnā́y* (< וַאֲדֹנָי* *wa-ʾăḏōnā́y*) (GKC §102m).

[17] Ibn Ezra *ad loc.*: חול ונקמץ בעבור שהוא סוף פסוק 'Secular (i.e., 'my lords') and pointed with *qamets* (אדנָי) because it stands at the end of the verse'. This is at variance with the sacred understanding 'my Lord' of b. Shevuot 35b (as already Targum Onqelos). Interpretations also differed

distinction in vocalisation between secular and sacred אדני, with *pataḥ* and *qamets* respectively, is firmly established in Rabbinic tradition and is even pre-Masoretic (Fleischer 1971–1972, 266–67).[18] This holy *qamets* may well have its origin in vocative 'O my God!', with regular pausal *a* > *å*, subsequently frozen and extended (Brockelmann 1908–1913, I:113, II:§178).[19] Sacred and profane applications of the word are also kept separate in the Babylonian[20] and Samaritan transmissions of Hebrew.[21]

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with regard to the reference of אדנָי in Gen. 18.3; see, e.g., Kimḥi *ad loc.* and, for further details, e.g., Gesenius (1829–1858, 329a); König (1897, 206).

[18] The grammatical term in question is *qmṣ* (בשפה קמוצה) with reference to the vowel of אדנָי. In later mediaeval Hebrew poetry, in the same context, we find זָקוף בלשון וקָמוץ בשפה (Ibn Gabirol). Since *qmṣ* here = 'pronounced with *qamets* [å]' (and not with *pataḥ* [a]), the parallel *zqp* should be understood in a sense equivalent to Syriac *zqp* = 'pronounce with the vowel *zqāfā* [å]' (East Syriac *ā*, West Syriac *ō*). Cf. below on the vowel *zqāfā* in Syriac *Māryā*.

[19] To Brockelmann's examples add Neo-Mandaic *mɔre* (Mutzafi 2014, 186–87). For the special vocative accentuation of NA *álaha* 'God' etc., see below.

[20] For the Babylonian *rafe* marking the sanctity of אדני, see Yeivin (1985, 912). For the same usage applied to אלהים, see below.

[21] Yeivin (1985, 912 fn. 117) provides references to the work of Z. Ben-Ḥayyim for sacred Samaritan *Ǎdå̊ni* versus secular *å̊danni*.

## 2.0. Sacred Phonology

That it is the back vowel *qamets* that characterises sacred אדנָי is significant. The phenomenon is not an isolated oddity, but belongs to a pattern. This special use of *qamets* with reference to God may also lie behind the pointing of the Biblical oath חַי אָנִי *ḥay ʾåֹnī* 'as I live'. The vocalisation of the pronoun אָנִי with *qamets* is in principle a phonological feature typical of pausal position: אֲנִי *ʾănī* in context versus אָנִי *ʾåֹnī* in pause. In the combination חַי אָנִי *ḥay ʾåֹnī*, however, *qamets* is the norm, irrespective of position in the sentence (GKC 106). This may well be because חַי אָנִי *ḥay ʾåֹnī* is used self-referentially only by God Himself in direct speech, and the pronoun hence pronounced with the sacred, festive *qamets*, which, as we have seen, also distinguishes אדנָי.[22]

The distinctive pronunciation of אדנָי is not confined to the Biblical vowel *qamets*. There is also a consonantal aspect to the question. A special articulation for the ד of this sacred name is found in various Hebrew reading traditions and also in the Hebrew component of Jewish languages. The Hebrew of the Jews of Baghdad does not as a rule distinguish between ד and דּ, both being pronounced as plosive [d]. This plosive pronunciation is used in every word except two: אדּני as the realisation of the Tetragrammaton and אֶחָדּ 'one' in the recitation of the Shema: שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה | אֶחָדּ 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the

[22] Thus Bauer and Leander (1922, 248): "infolge der feierlichen Aussprache." See below for festive *qamets* in the reading tradition of Cochin, Kerala (India).

Lord is one' (Deut. 6.4).[23] In these two highly charged religious contexts ד is not only interdental [d̲], but usually also emphatic [ḍ] (Blanc 1964, 141; Morag 1977, 3–4; Mansour 1991, 47 fn. 33), as if the words were written in Arabic with velarised ظ/ض. The Divine Name in Baghdad is pronounced *aḏ̲ōnāy* ~ *aḍ̲ōnāy*. Similarly anomalous interdental pronunciation in this particular word has been noted for other Sephardi traditions, e.g., Aleppo (Syria; Katz 1981, 4–5) and Constantine (Algeria; Maman 2016, 223).

The emphatic, i.e. velarised, [ḍ] of *aḍ̲ōnāy* in Baghdad pronunciation has parallels elsewhere; other Hebrew traditions, too, pronounce this special word with added expressive velarisation, e.g., the Judaeo-Arabic of Tunisia.[24] Muslim Arabic, too, may use emphatic articulation for a similar affective purpose. A well-known peculiarity of Arabic pronunciation is the emphatic *ḷ* (*mufaxxama*, *muġallaḍa*) of the word *ʾaḷḷāhu* 'God' (Cantineau 1960 [1941], 51; Ferguson 1956 and the literature referred to in these places). In classical Arabic the independent phoneme *ḷ* occurs only here. It is not a coincidence that such a special phonological feature should characterise such a special word. The em-

[23] The special pronunciation of ד in this case is due to (not fully clear) Rabbinical precept: see, e.g., Berliner (1879, 28–29); Kahle (1959, 180–81); *Qiṣṣur Šulḥan ʿAruk̲* (ed. Ganzfried, §17.3). In some MSS and prints the ד of this אֶחָד is included among the *literae majusculae* and written large; the ח may also be written with a gable-like top.

[24] Virtually all the variants in Henshke (2007, 174) are pronounced with the velarisation mentioned there (174–75 fn. 3).

phatic pronunciation is here without any phonological motivation; it is the exponent of the word's specialised, sacred meaning.[25] The Arabic term describing its function is *taʿḍīm* 'exaltation, glorification'. It is a moot point whether the emphasis (*tafxīm*, *taġlīḍ*) of *l(l)* in this word is an indigenous Arabic development or due to the influence of Syriac pronunciation—both possibilities have their advocates.[26]

In connection with the emphatic pronunciation of *ʾalḷlāh* it is worth mentioning that in the Babylonian transmission of Biblical and post-biblical Hebrew *rafe* and *dagesh* signs are applied to the *lamed* of the word אלהים in order to distinguish the God of Israel from the heathen gods of the nations: *rafe* for the former, *dagesh* for the latter (Yeivin 1985, I:357, II:908–10; cf. for אדני above fn. 20). The phonetic implications of this marking are not clear. If the meanings are to be distinguished by gemination (sacred *Elohim* versus profane *ellohim*), one might, *mutatis mutandis*, compare the semantic function of gemination in Syriac *ʾaḇā* 'biological father' versus *ʾAbbā* 'Father' as a clerical title. It is more probable, however, that the vocaliser had in mind a contrast between plain and emphatic *l* : *l(l)* (cf. Bergsträsser 1918, §10n fn.

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[25] Feghali (1919, 67): "il s'agit ici d'une emphase d'origine psychologique"; Fischer and Jastrow (1980, 57): "als Ausdruck der Bedeutungshervorhebung." Cf. below fn. 28.

[26] See Blau (1972, 175–77 [= Blau 1988, 332–34]) and Ambros (1981), respectively; further details in Kiltz 2012. The emphatic pronunciation applies also to the vocative أَللّٰهُمَّ *ʾalḷlāhumma* (< אלהים?), but, significantly, not to the heathen goddess اللات *al-Lāt* (who also appears in the Qurʾān).

4), the foreign, non-Jewish 'gods' being marked with the phonetics of alien Islamic *ʾaḷḷāh*. If so, we have here an early example of Islamic impact on Hebrew pronunciation. Emphatic *ḷ* occasionally occurs in the word for 'God' in Neo-Aramaic, too. The Barzani forms *ʾuḷa* ~ *ʾuḷha* would appear to be inherited native words (Mutzafi 2002, 45);[27] perhaps, however, Arabic provided a helping hand in the emergence of *ḷ*.

Another point connected with the NA realisation of 'God' is its accentuation. Maclean (1901, 12b) tells us that the Urmi pronunciation of the word is "usually proparox.", i.e., *álaha.* He remarks on this because *álaha* is against the predominant penultimate stress assignment of the dialect. The reason for the peculiarity is that *álaha* is in principle a vocative form 'O God!' (Khan 2008, I:125–26; 2016, I:227 and cf. Maclean 1895, 13; for originally vocative אדנָי see above fn. 19), its stress pattern perhaps having been extended beyond strictly vocative usage and thus calling for mention. Here too belongs WNA *alō* (Spitaler 1938, 76 top).

The expressive velarisation so very strongly associated with *ʾaḷḷāh* occurs elsewhere in Arabic. It is not uncommon in Arabic dialects to find contrasts of the kind *yā Ṛaḅḅ(i)* 'O (my) Lord!', pronounced with what M. Cohen terms "emphase psychologique,"[28] versus non-emphatic *rabbi*, being the imperative

[27] Mutzafi (2014, 187) gives NENA *ʾəḷa* and also quotes Ṭuroyo *aḷó(ho)* with emphatic *ḷ*.

[28] See Cohen (1912, 54), where it is stated that *ṛ* is frequent "dans des mots psychologiquement emphatiques," among them *ṛəbbʷi* 'le Seigneur,

of *rby* II[29] or the substantive 'Jewish rabbi'.[30] In like manner, some bedouin dialects use velarisation to distinguish between plain *mḥammad* ~ *mḥimmid* as a secular personal name and emphatic *Mḥaṃṃad* when reference is to the Prophet of Islam (Borg 2001; Shawarba 2012, 32, 58). Neo-Aramaic can show similar differentiating examples. In Jewish dialects, native תורא 'ox' is pronounced plain, viz. *tora*, whereas sacred 'Torah' < (Hebrew תורה) is always emphatic: ⁺*Tora* (Sabar 1974–1975, 278; 1991, 181; 2002, 308; Mutzafi 2004, 247, 248; 2008a, 390, 392).

In the Christian dialect of Urmi *mara* 'owner', with plain pronunciation, is a day-to-day secular word, but ⁺*Maran*, ⁺*Marya* with emphatic, backed pronunciation are sacred terms with the particular meanings 'Our Lord, the Lord (God)' (Khan 2016, III:209, 229).[31] There is a historical background to this distinction. In classical Syriac, biliteral ܡܳܪܳܐ *mārā* is of secular application, whereas triliteral *Māryā* ܡܳܪܝܳܐ is sacred and specific to God and Christ—a variant root assigned to a particular meaning. These are ultimately but two manifestations of the 'same' word.

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Dieu'. For the term 'emphase psychologique' see Cohen (1912, 51, 92, and 549 Index s.v.). Cf. above fn. 25.

[29] Thus for Palestinian Arabic, see Elihay (2005, 439) rɑbb 'Lord' versus rabba 'bring up, raise (a child)', the distinction being marked in this transcription by backed 'ɑ' versus 'a' rather than *ṛ* versus *r*.

[30] Destaing (1937, 224): *ṛĕbbi* 'Dieu' versus *rĕbbi* 'rabbin'; Brunot and Malka (1940, 49): *ṛåbb$^{w}$i* versus *rebbi*, taken up by Leslau (1945–1946, 67, 71, 73 [= Leslau 1988, 73, 77, 79]); Yoda (2005, 336–37): *rəbbi* 'rabbi' versus *ṛəḇḇi* 'God'; Henshke (2007, 367 fn. 1).

[31] Khan (2016, III:557) gives many examples of secular *marət-* 'owner of…'. Cf. below fn. 45, on *marta* versus ⁺*Marta*.

The relationship between them, however, is not clear, for in Semitic languages, generally, and in Aramaic, in particular, the root vacillates between *mrʾ*, *mry*, and *mr(ø)* and the noun pattern between **qaṭl* and **qāṭil*. If, as seems likely, the basic form of the word can be posited as **marʾā*, a *qaṭl* noun from the root *mrʾ* (cf. Arabic *al-marʾu* 'the man') (thus Fox 2003, 76), the long *ā* of *mārā* will be secondary, having arisen through familiar phonological developments: **marʾā* > **marā* > *mārā*. Such a straightforward phonological explanation does not apply to triconsonantal *Māryā*, in which the *ā* of the closed first syllable is not easily compatible with a **qaṭl* origin. On the face of it, this looks like a **qāṭil* form and perhaps that is indeed what it is (or at least came to be).[32] We would therefore have two noun patterns for the 'same' word. A possibility perhaps worth considering as a contributory factor is that the long *ā* of the first syllable of sacred *Māryā* is not (only) a reflex of the *ā* of **qāṭil*, but (also) a special (pausal, vocative?—cf. above fn. 19) pronunciation specific to the name of the Deity, viz. **maryā* (**qaṭl*) > *Māryā* with festive *ʒqāfā/qamets* in order to give enhanced expression to the sacred name. The contrast in Syriac between secular **marʾā* (> *mārā*) and sacred *Māryā*[33] would then be typologically parallel to the aforementioned Biblical Hebrew contrast between secular אֲדֹנַי *ʾăḏōnay* 'my lords' with *pataḥ* and sacred אֲדֹנָי *ʾăḏōnɔ̂y* 'my Lord

[32] For the fluctuating morphology cf. Bauer and Leander (1927, 190–91). The *ā* of the doublet *mārā* will also have played a role in the formation of *Māryā*.

[33] In Ṭuroyo *moro* versus *Moryo* ~ *Muryo* ~ *Məryo*.

(God)' with *qamets* (cf. above fn. 18, on the Hebrew use of *ʒqp* with reference to אדנָי).

If so, we might say that the modern flat, emphatic pronunciation of ⁺*Marya* in the speech of the Assyrian Christians of Urmi[34] is but the modern synharmonic reflex of the festive *ʒqāfā* vowel *ā* of old—both give added phonological expression to the sanctity of the Divine Name, i.e., Mother of Christ, already singled out by its conservative triliteral morphology.

'Emphasis' almost inevitably brings with it backed vowels. The velarised consonants and their concomitant retracted vowels are so intimately connected that scholars have often hesitated as to whether the phonological signal lies primarily in the consonants, in the vowels, or belongs equally to both ('synharmonism'). Whatever the case, there is no doubt that the two go together and are in many respects two complementary sides of a single coin. Accordingly, backed vowels may be applied in order to produce an effect similar to the heightened expressive velarisation of Arabic *ʾaḷḷāh*. This is what seems to occur in the Hebrew reading tradition of the Jews of Cochin, Kerala (India), where the use of back vowels, especially of festive *qamets*, is used to enhance emotionally charged passages, e.g., when reading from the Scroll of Esther and the Passover *Haggada* (Forsström 2013, 462 and cf. Khan 2013, 346; Maman 2016, 221; for festive *qamets* in Biblical Hebrew, cf. above fn. 22). A similar affective function of back pronunciation has been held to account for the absence of a vocative form of 'God' in pagan Greek and Latin, in which the

[34] Note also *Maṛya* (with emphatic *ṛ*) given for Christian NENA by Mutzafi (2014, 187).

expected vocative has been replaced by the respective nominative forms ὁ θεός and *deus*. In order to address the deity, the 'tiefe Stimmlage' of the back case-vowel of ὁ θεός was preferred to the thin front vowel of the vocative θεέ. The latter paradigm form is attested, but is marginal, apparently because it lacked sufficient solemnity for ritual use. This Greek usage, rooted in ancient cultic practice, was then followed by Latin *deus* (Havers 1931, 198–99 and the relevant literature on p. 268; Blass and Debrunner 1961, §147[3]).

Prominence to a sacred concept may also be imparted by the use of archaism; i.e., instead of introducing a novelty of orthography (e.g., 'G-d' incompletely written) or pronunciation (e.g., *ʾaḷḷāh* with added velarisation), a similar effect may be achieved by retaining an old or obsolete form. In Biblical Hebrew a sacred morphological archaism has been noticed in the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah uses both short and long forms of the 1st person singular pronoun 'I', viz. אֲנִי and אָנֹכִי, respectively. The distribution, however, is not arbitrary: when God is speaking, it is the fuller form אנכי that is used (Hornkohl 2016, 36).[35] It is such deliberate archaism that lies behind the aforementioned use in the Dead Sea Scrolls of palaeo-Hebrew script for writing the Tetragrammaton.

The use of archaism in order to distinguish between profane and divine may also be given phonological expression. A well-established case in the Hebrew Bible is the oath formula

[35] Note that אָנכִי (unlike changeable אֲנִי ~ אָנִי) has a stable *qamets* in both context and pause.

opening with חי. This idiom is regularly pointed with *ṣere* in secular contexts: חֵי פַּרְעֹה *ḥē parʿō* 'as Pharaoh liveth' (Gen. 42.15), but with *pataḥ* when the reference is to the Deity:[36] חַי הָאֱלֹהִים 'as God liveth' (2 Sam. 2.27). The two usages occur side by side in חַי־יְהוָה וְחֵי נַפְשְׁךָ 'as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth' (1 Sam. 20.3). Such use of marked archaic pronunciation in order impart distinctiveness to sacred names is common to many cultures, e.g., the fricative pronunciation [ɣ/x] of Russian г in forms of Бог 'God' and Господь 'Lord' and the ultimate stress of אדני and אלהים [אלקים] in Ashkenazi Hebrew (Hommel 1917, 16).

A case of sacred phonetic archaism can be observed in both Christian and Jewish dialects of Neo-Aramaic. In the daily vernacular most Neo-Aramaic dialects have typically shifted **ḥ* to *x*. In the official, sacred vocabulary of religious life, however, much of which is naturally borrowed from classical Syriac or Hebrew, the original *ḥ* (and ʿ) may be retained (or re-introduced?). This is particularly true of dialects of the *fellīḥi* type spoken in the area of the Mosul plain. In these dialects, in which pharyngal *ḥ* is part

[36] For this 'rabbinical refinement', see, e.g., GKC (270 fn. 1, 472 fn. 1). The diphthong of **ḥayy* was regularly preserved in the combination **ḥayy yhwh* and from there transferred to other sacred cases "in dogmatischen Interesse" (Bergsträsser 1918, 99) or as a "masoretische Finesse" (Bauer and Leander 1922, 204 fn. 3). For further details see Greenberg (1957) and Blau (1983, 79 [= Blau 1996, 194]). Similar sacred versus profane variants of this word occur in certain Yemenite reading traditions of Aramaic in which חַיָּא *ḥayyā* with dagesh applies to God, whereas חַיָא *ḥayā* without dagesh is used with reference to created beings (Morag 1962, 189–90 [= Morag 2003, 268–69]); cf. the Yemenite hesitation at Lev. 13.14 in the reading of Targum Onqelos.

of the phonemic inventory,[37] there thus arises an audible contrast in the reflex of **ḥ* between the vernacular and religious registers.[38] This may be illustrated by the root מש"ח *mšḥ*. The word for 'Messiah' is pronounced with *ḥ*: *mšīḥa*. This *ḥ* marks the word as special; its elevated, spiritual meaning is underlined by its distinctive non-vernacular phonology. It is interesting to examine other derivatives of the same root, viz. the verb 'anoint' and the noun 'oil'. The following table reveals only a sampling of the facts (which in any case may be somewhat fluid):

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[37] The presence of *ḥ* (and ʿ) in such dialects is certainly connected with their proximity to Arabic; thus Maclean (1895, 316).

[38] For a similar (and far more pervasive) situation in Arabic see Holes (2004, 68–69, and many other places throughout the book, especially ch. 9 "Language Level").

| | ‘Messiah’ | ‘anoint’ | ‘oil’ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yasso (1994) | *mšḥ* | *mšḥ* | *mšḥ* |
| Alqosh[39] | *mšḥ* | *?* | *mšḥ* |
| Rhétoré (1912)[40] | *mšḥ* | *?* | *mšx* |
| Aradhin[41] | *mšḥ* | *mšḥ* | *mšx* |
| Qaraqosh[42] | *mšḥ* ~ *mšx* | *mšḥ* | *mšx* |
| J. Zakho[43] | *mšḥ* | *mšx* | *mšx* |

The table shows two contrary influences at work in the words for ‘anoint’ and ‘oil’: on the one hand, the transparent association with the *mšḥ* root of ‘Messiah’ leads to generalisation of *ḥ* across the board (possibly reflecting a purist tendency); on the other hand, normal vernacular usage favours *x*. The verb ‘anoint’ shares in the holiness of ‘Messiah’, viz. ‘the Anointed’, and by religious association is very likely to be pronounced with *ḥ* too. This is much less so with ‘oil, butter’, which is associated more with the kitchen than the church. Its lower degree of sanctity is reflected by the *x* with which it is mostly pronounced.

[39] *Mšiḥa* ‘Messiah’ (Coghill 2003, 22, 213) and *mešḥez-zɛθe* ‘olive oil’ (329 Text A §101).

[40] *Mchiḥa* ‘le Christ’ (Rhétoré 1912, 12–13) versus *mechkha* ‘huile’ (11).

[41] *Mšiḥa* ‘Messiah’ (Krotkoff 1982, 138 ult.) versus *mišxa* ‘clarified butter’ (137). For the verb ‘anoint’, the glossary (138) has *mša:xa*, but this might be a mistake, for the textual example (98 §92) has *mšḥ*. On the other hand, it is quite possible that usage is not stable and that *ḥ* and *x* here alternate.

[42] Khan (2002, 41) has the expected *mšiḥa*, but the glossary (738) gives *mšiḥa* ~ *mšixa*; the word for ‘oil’ is *məšxa* (738). The verb ‘anoint’ is *mšḥ* (*mṣḥ* in the glossary of verbs [717] seems to be a slip).

[43] Sabar (2002, 226a).

The main point is that the sacred Christian or Jewish 'Messiah' will (if possible[44]) be pronounced with archaising *ḥ*, a sound typifying the sacred register of religious vocabulary, whereas other derivatives of the same root are liable to be pronounced with *x*. In this way *mšiḥa* 'Messiah' (and similar classicisms of religious import) acquires a phonological distinctiveness which marks its status as a significant sacred word. In dialects beyond the reach of Arabic, whose speakers do not possess the ability to pronounce *ḥ*, 'Messiah' undergoes the regular vernacular treatment and is pronounced *mšixa* with *x*, thus remaining phonologically unmarked. Among such non-differentiating *mšixa* dialects are those of the uprooted Assyrians resettled in the Khabur area in northeastern Syria (Talay 2008-2009, I:82 fn. 141) and the Assyrian Christians of Urmi.

## 3.0. Conclusion

These desultory notes, offered in grateful admiration to my friend Geoffrey Khan, are intended to show that the well-known ancient Jewish aversion to explicit writing and utterance of the Tetragrammaton is part of a larger picture, extending to modern times. That picture involves the pronunciation of sacred names, which

[44] Pharyngal *ḥ*, however, is not always possible. Sinha (2000, 190 fn. 61) records for the dialect of Bēṣpən *mšiḥa* ~ *mšiha* (*sic*). Speakers of the dialect of Sat have only the latter: *mšiha* (Mutzafi 2008b, 24). That the realisation of **ḥ* in these cases is [h] and not pharyngal [ḥ] does not alter the marked status of *mšiha*—the point is that the secular reflex *x* is avoided. For the pronunciation of **ḥ* as [h] cf. Maclean (1895, 317); Rhétoré (1912, 13 fn. 1).

in several cultures are liable to be marked by deliberately distinctive phonology, imbuing them with an audible aura of sanctity. This sacred distinctiveness takes on different (sometimes overlapping) forms; examples have been given of the special use of interdentals, velarisation of consonants, back vowels (festive *qamets*), and phonological archaism.

The association of heightened meaning with a special sound pattern belongs to the phenomenon of sound symbolism (*Lautsymbolik*). This subject has been treated by our honoured friend and colleague in his recent *magnum opus* (תרתי משמע) on the language of the Assyrian Christians of Urmi (Khan 2016, I:178–86, especially 178–80). There it is shown how the presence or absence of suprasegmental emphasis may affect the semantics of what are genetically the 'same' words. The motivation for plain or emphatic pronunciation is not always etymological; it may also have a psychological cause. Emphatic consonants with their concomitant back vowels may heighten, amplify, or specify the meaning: general *marta* 'owner (F), mistress' versus the particular proper name ⁺*Marta* 'Martha' (Luke 10.38, etc.) (Khan 2016, I:51; III:211);[45] *štx* 'spread out' (e.g., washing on the line) versus the stronger action ⁺*štx* 'flatten somebody out, render him supine' (Khan 2016, I:112–13, 178–79, III:292, 299). Conversely, the absence or removal of emphatic pronunciation may have just the opposite effect, connoting diminution, delicacy, endearment, etc.

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[45] Cf. the aforementioned (fn. 31) profane *mara* versus holy ⁺*Maran*, ⁺*Marya*.

The details given in the preceding discussion are documented in different ways: those of Biblical Hebrew, especially in its Tiberian transmission, have written representation (אדֹנָי), are systematically applied (*qere perpetuum*), and are backed by ancient authoritative Masoretic tradition. This applies in principle also to Arabic *ʾaḷḷāh*, the pronunciation of which (although lacking formal graphic expression) is bound by consistent conventions, formulated in Arabic philological literature and ubiquitously observed in Islamic life. Such uniformity applies in a far lesser degree to the unwritten living pronunciation traditions of Hebrew (Baghdad אדֹנִי) and to various features of Neo-Semitic languages (*Mḥaṃṃad*). These are mostly known from modern oral sources and in their application considerable variety obtains: not every Jewish community pronounces אדני with interdental *d̲* (*ḏ*) and most Arabic dialects seem not to apply differentiating velarisation to the name of the Prophet Muḥammad. Modes of documentation and differences in distribution apart, all these phenomena have a common denominator: the investment of sacred names with special, distinctive pronunciation.

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# THE SHAPE OF THE TEEN NUMERALS IN CENTRAL SEMITIC*

*Benjamin D. Suchard*

The numerals 'eleven'–'nineteen' are the closest thing many Semitic languages have to nominal compounds. While the semantic connection to the numerals 'one'–'nine' (henceforth: *digits*), on the one hand, and to 'ten', on the other hand, is clear, these teen numerals behave like single words in many respects, often undergoing unique sound changes and reductions, while sometimes preserving archaisms that have been lost elsewhere. As such, they furnish an interesting opportunity for linguistic reconstruction.

The topic of this paper is the reconstruction of the teen numerals as found in Central Semitic, defined as Northwest Semitic—Canaanite, Aramaic, Ugaritic, and their closest relatives—Arabic, and Sabaic (cf. Huehnergard and Pat-El 2019).[1] Unlike

* It is a great pleasure to dedicate this study, which is largely based on data from Arabic, Aramaic, and Biblical Hebrew, to Geoffrey Khan, whose work has incomparably advanced the study of these languages. I thank Marijn van Putten for his helpful comments on an earlier draft, as well as the anonymous reviewers and volume editors. All remaining errors are my own.

[1] The other Ancient South Arabian languages, viz. Minaic, Qatabanic, and Hadramitic, are also usually included. But they do not attest the **yaqṭul-u* imperfect that is the key isogloss defining Central Semitic

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other languages, Central Semitic forms its teens numerals in a digit-teen order with both the digit and the 'teen' word inflecting for gender (with some exceptions). I am not entirely convinced of Central Semitic as a genetic subfamily of Semitic, as the shared innovations characterising the group are limited (see the balanced discussion in Kogan 2015, 130–226). Hence, I have avoided the use of terms like 'Proto-Central-Semitic', leaving room for alternative scenarios, such as areal diffusion or the Central Semitic languages preserving the Proto-Semitic situation as far as the teen numerals are concerned.

We shall consider the reconstruction of the teen numerals in three steps, starting with the stems of the digits and of 'one' in particular, followed by the endings of both the digits and the 'teen' words, and, finally, the shape of the 'teen' words themselves, especially the feminine.

## 1.0. The Digit Stems

The reconstruction of the numeral stems 'three'–'nine' is mostly uncontroversial (cf. Huehnergard 2019, 61).[2] Within Central Semitic, the digits used in the numerals 'thirteen'–'nineteen' show

(Van der Poel 2022) and it has not been established that Ancient South Arabian forms a genetic grouping, in which case they would be admitted based on Sabaic's credentials. In any case, they barely attest any forms that are relevant for our purposes here.

[2] Huehnergard reconstructs 'three' as **θalāθ-* instead of **śalāθ-*, the reconstruction I follow here. I prefer to explain forms with initial **θ* in Arabic and Northwest Semitic as resulting from complete assimilation to the stem-final **θ*; contamination of the initial **θ* of the preceding

the same forms as the corresponding numerals below 'ten'. This includes the use of the feminine suffix **-(a)t-* with the masculine instead of the feminine ('chiastic concord').[3] For the reconstructed forms, see Table 1 at the end of this section.

The numeral 'two' should be reconstructed with a word-initial consonant cluster **θn-* in the masculine (Testen 1985). This is evidenced by the shift of **n > r* in this word in Aramaic (**θr-ēn*) and Modern South Arabian (e.g., Omani Mehri *θr-ōh*), the presence of a prothetic vowel with *hamzat al-waṣl* in Classical Arabic (*iθn-ā-ni*), and the lack of pretonic lengthening in Biblical Hebrew (*šn-áyim*; Suchard 2019, 42).

In the feminine, Arabic attests two forms, *iθn-at-ā-ni* and *θin-t-ā-ni*, which go back to the stems **θn-at-* and **θin-t-*, respectively. The former matches Aramaic **θr-at-ēn* > e.g., Biblical Aramaic *tartēn*, with metathesis of **ra > ar*. The latter matches

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numeral, 'two', may also have played a role. The alternative is to explain forms with initial **ś*, as in Geʿez and Modern South Arabian, through dissimilation from the second **θ* and/or partial assimilation to the **l*. This seems less likely, considering the historical attestation of the change from *ślθ* to *θlθ* in Sabaic (forms retrieved through the online Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions, https://dasi.cnr.it).

[3] Chiastic concord has been given up in Ugaritic prose: the unsuffixed, historically feminine form is used for both genders. The originally masculine forms in *-t* have been repurposed and are used only when counting shekels or days, when the word 'shekels' or 'day(s)' is elided. This holds for the independent digits, the digits in the teens, and the '-teen' word itself (Tropper 2000, §§69.133, 143). In 'twelve', the masculine digit stem *ṯn* has been generalised to both genders (Tropper 2000, §62.22).

Ugaritic *ṯt* and Biblical Hebrew *št-áyim*, resulting from contraction of **šitt-áyim* (Bravmann 1952; Suchard 2019, 243; Khan 2020, 1:327–30). The form **θin-t-* may be more original, with **θn-at-* being modelled after the masculine, or **θin-t-* may have developed from earlier **θn-t-* through vowel epenthesis. The variable presence of **i* before the stem-final consonant is also seen in 'five':[4] contrast Classical Arabic *ḫams(-at)-* with Biblical Hebrew *ḥă̄mēš*, *ḥămišš-ā*. As with 'two (F)', this interchange may relate to the variation between **-t-* and **-at-*, the two forms of the feminine suffix, whose original distribution is yet to be determined.

While most West Semitic languages use the numeral **ʾaḥad-* 'one' as the digit in 'eleven', as in Biblical Hebrew *ʾaḥaḏ ʿāśār*, the latter language also attests another morpheme. This is used in both the masculine, *ʿaštē ʿă̄śă̄r*, and the feminine, *ʿaštē ʿɛśrē*. Ugaritic similarly attests both *ʿšt ʿšr* and *ʿšt ʿšrh*, as well as two instances of *ʿšt ʿšrt*. Ugaritic also has one attestation of *ʿšty* as 'one', apparently feminine, without a following 'teen' word. It has long been clear that these forms are related to Akkadian *ištēn* (M), *išteat* (F), as well as Sabaic *ʿs[1]tn-m*, used only in dates (Stein 2011, 1052; also attested once in Qatabanic and, as *ʿs[1]t*, in an unclear context in Minaic). Wilson-Wright (2014) convincingly argues that this lexeme represents the basic Proto-Semitic numeral 'one'. The more common **ʾaḥad-* is not originally a numeral, but an adjective meaning 'alone, sole'. The Hebrew and Ugaritic forms

[4] Also in 'six' if Geʿez *sədəs-t-* (M) and Akkadian *šediš* (F) are taken into account. Only the form without **i* is unambiguously attested in Central Semitic.

of 'eleven' mentioned above are thus archaic, having resisted the intrusion of **ʾaḥad-* into the numeral system. Based on the distribution in Ugaritic and Sabaic, the original word may have remained in use in Central Semitic when 'one' was substantivised and occurred without a governing noun, similar to the German distinction between *eins* and *ein*. A new distinction of this kind also arose in Classical Arabic after *ʾaḥad-* had ousted the Proto-Semitic word completely, only to be limited to substantivised contexts itself while ceding the attributive contexts to innovative *wāḥid-*.

Wilson-Wright reconstructs the original numeral 'one' as **ʿast-*, feminine **ʿast-ay-*, without providing any arguments for the vocalism. The **a* vowel is supported by Hebrew and possibly by Hurrian *ašt*, if this represents a borrowing from Semitic (Wilson-Wright 2014, 3 fn. 6). On the other hand, Akkadian attests an *i* that Wilson-Wright is hard pressed to explain. An *i* is also found in Arabic **ʾiḥd-ay-*, which Wilson-Wright ingeniously suggests was patterned after the older numeral, as far as the feminine suffix **-ay-* is concerned (see also Sabaic *ʾḥdy*). All these forms are most easily reconciled by positing **ʿist-*, not **ʿast-*, as the stem. The Akkadian forms regularly derive from **ʿist-ān-* and **ʿist-ay-*, showing the same alternation between masculine **-ān-* and feminine **-ay-* as Classical Arabic adjectives like *ǧawʿ-ān-* (M), *ǧawʿ-ā* < **ǧawʿ-ay-* (F) 'hungry'; the feminine then added a redundant suffix **-at-*, as also suggested by Wilson-Wright. The Sabaic and Qatabanic masculine forms similarly reflect **ʿist-ān-*. In Arabic and possibly Sabaic, the pattern of feminine **ʿist-ay-* was

retained, but the productive root replaced the archaic one, yielding **ʾiḥd-ay-* > Classical Arabic *ʾiḥd-ā*. In Hebrew, and perhaps in the source language of Hurrian *ašt*, the *a* vowel is then best explained as an ad hoc assimilation to the preceding pharyngeal. This leaves us with the reconstructed stems given in Table 1.

Table 1. The reconstructed Central Semitic digit stems, 'one'–'nine'

| meaning | masculine | feminine |
|---|---|---|
| 'one' | **ʿist-ān-* | **ʿist-ay-* |
| 'two' | **θn-* | **θ(i)n-(a)t-* |
| 'three' | **śalāθ-(a)t-* | **śalāθ-* |
| 'four' | **ʾarbaʿ-(a)t-* | **ʾarbaʿ-* |
| 'five' | **ẖam(i)s-(a)t-* | **ẖam(i)s-* |
| 'six' | **sidθ-at-* | **sidθ-* |
| 'seven' | **sabʿ-at-* | **sabʿ-* |
| 'eight' | **θamāniy-at-* | **θamāniy-* |
| 'nine' | **tisʿ-at-* | **tisʿ-* |

## 2.0. The Endings

In the numeral 'twelve', the digit 'two' should be reconstructed without nunation or mimation, terminating in a case ending. This is clear from Classical Arabic *iθn-ā/ay ʿašar-a*, *iθnat-ā/ay ʿašrat-a*, Ugaritic *ṯn ʿšr*, *ṯn ʿšrh*, Aramaic forms like Biblical Aramaic *trē ʿăśar*, Sabaic *ṯn-y ʿs²r*, and Biblical Hebrew *šnē ʿāśār*, *štē ʿeśrē*. The more common Hebrew forms *šnēm ʿāśār* and *štēm ʿeśrē* are modelled after *šnáyim*, *štáyim* 'two', with a different outcome of the diphthong **ay* in unstressed position. It is unclear whether a case distinction like that found in Arabic should be reconstructed, as it is lacking from the other teens.

'Eleven' and 'thirteen'–'nineteen' have an uninflecting *-a* on both the digit and the 'teen' word in Arabic. According to Hetzron (1977), this shows that the digit-teen order is a late innovation, replacing the ten-and-digit order found in languages like Geʿez. More recently, scholars have preferred to identify uninflecting **-a* in several other forms and constructions as an archaism (e.g., Hasselbach 2013, 47). In the teen numerals, Arabic may similarly preserve an old construction in isolation from the rest of the case system.

A difference between the teens and the lower numerals in some languages is that nouns counted by a teen numeral may occur in the singular instead of the plural, e.g., Biblical Hebrew *ʾarbaʿ ʿeśrē šānnā* 'fourteen years' (Gen. 37.41). In Classical Arabic, this is the rule. The counted noun in such phrases occurs in the accusative, e.g., *iθn-ā ʿašar-a šahr-an* 'twelve months' (Q 9.36), *iθnat-ā ʿašrat-a ʿayn-an* 'twelve springs' (Q 2.60); note that both examples occur in a context where the nominative is expected, as confirmed by the digits' *-ā* ending. In other constructions, the accusative can be used to form adverbial phrases. This adverbial use probably also underlies the accusative in teen numeral constructions (cf. Joüon and Muraoka 2006, §127b).

Meanwhile, the *-a* ending is formally identical to the Proto-Semitic third person masculine singular stative ending as seen in the West Semitic Perfect **qaṭal-a*. The stative meaning is still seen, for instance, in Biblical Hebrew forms like *kāḇēḏ* < **kabid-a* 'it (M) is heavy'. But this ending is probably also the source of the *-a* seen in Classical Arabic negated phrases of existence such as *lā ʾilāh-a* 'there is no god', *lā šakk-a* '(there is) no doubt', etc.

In this construction, *-a* is synchronically best analysed as the accusative construct state ending.[5] It also occurs following the feminine suffix *-at-*, just as in the teens. If we assume that it retains its inherited stative meaning in the teen numerals, an expression like *ʾaḥad-a ʿašar-a kawkab-an* 'eleven stars' (Q 12.4) could be understood literally as 'it is one-ten, star-wise'. The preservation of marginal uses of the accusative in this construction argues for its antiquity.

The presence of **-a* on the teens is confirmed by Syriac. There, an unexpected *-a-* occurs between the digit and the 'teen' word, both in masculine forms, like *ḥḏaʿsar* 'eleven', *tloṯaʿsar* 'thirteen', *arbaʿtaʿsar* 'fourteen', and feminine ones, like *ḥḏaʿ(e)sre*, *tloṯaʿ(e)sre* (forms, transcribed here according to West Syriac pronunciation, taken from Nöldeke 1904). While these are but some of the teen numerals' many different attested forms, the *-a-* following the digit is a constant (excepting the forms of 'fourteen', 'seventeen', and 'nineteen', where it would come between two instances of ʿ; these forms, like *arbaʿ(e)sre*, arose from forms like **arbʿaʿ(e)sre* through haplology). This *-a-* is unlikely to be an epenthetic vowel, as a straightforward digit-teen combination like ***ḥaḏ-ʿsar* would be permissible according to the rules of Syriac syllable structure. In the masculine, a reconstruction matching Classical Arabic would produce exactly these forms according to the regular Aramaic rules of word stress and vowel

[5] Fischer (1972, §318) cites the examples *lā laððāt-i li-š-šībi* 'there are no pleasures for old men' and *lā ʾab-ā laka* 'may you have no father!', both of which show accusative construct endings other than *-a*.

reduction, e.g., **ʾaḥad-a ʿaśar-a > *ḥadaʿaśár > ḥḏaʿsar*; **ʾarbaʿ(a)t-a ʿaśar-a > *ʾarbaʿ(a)taʿaśár > arbaʿtaʿsar*.[6]

Most other Central Semitic languages do not provide much information on the ending of the teens (on the feminine 'teen' word and its suffix, see below). Sabaic shows a lack of mimation, e.g., *ḫms¹t ʿs²r ymtm* 'fifteen days' (Ir 13.25). In Biblical Hebrew, the tonic lengthening in the masculine 'teen' word *ʿå̄śå̄r* suggests that it goes back to a mimated form **ʿaśar-am* (Suchard 2019, 100–7, 244), but the mimation or the lengthening may be analogical here. The endings on the teen numerals should thus be reconstructed as **-a*, as in Arabic.

A remaining issue is the ending of the archaic digit 'one', *ʿaštē*, in the Biblical Hebrew forms. The spelling עשתי with final *yod* suggests that the final vowel in Tiberian Hebrew goes back to a diphthong **-ay* without any following vowel, since both **-ay-a > **-ā* and **-ay-i* or **-ay-u > -ē* would have been spelled with *he*, as in עשתה*** (on these contractions, see Suchard 2019, 132–39). This **-ay* in **ʿist-ay* must result from contamination with the oblique ending of the following numeral, **θn-ay/*θint-ay* 'two (M)/(F)'. As the case ending **-ay* is unmarked for gender, this also explains why *ʿaštē* is used in both genders of 'eleven', as

[6] In *arbaʿtaʿsar* and other numerals where the digit ends in *-t-*, the epenthetic status of *-a-* is *a priori* more plausible than with 'eleven', as Syriac does not allow four consonants in a row, as in ***arbaʿtʿsar*. But Proto-Aramaic does not seem to have used the short allomorph **-t-* word-finally, only when suffixes followed (cf. Suchard 2024). Without a following **-a* on the digit, the expected reconstruction would therefore be Proto-Aramaic **ʾarbaʿat ʿaśar* or **ʾarbaʿā ʿaśar*, which should have yielded ***arbʿaṯʿsar* or ***arb(ʿ)oʿsar* in Syriac, not *arbaʿtaʿsar*.

the *-*ay* ending replaced the original gender-marking suffixes *-*ān-* and *-*ay-*.[7]

The form *ʿšt* occurs in both genders in Ugaritic as well, although this is unremarkable for the Ugaritic teen numerals. While Syriac has replaced the stem with the productive digit 'one', gender marking on the digit seems absent here too: neither *ḥḏaʿsar* (M) nor *ḥḏaʿ(e)sre* (F) show any trace of a feminine suffix on the digit. As both parts of 'eleven' show gender agreement in Arabic (*ʾaḥada ʿašara* [M] versus *ʾiḥdā ʿašrata* [F]), the contamination of **ʿist-* by the following numeral may have been a shared Northwest Semitic development. Epicene Northwest Semitic **ʿist-ā[ʔ]/ay* then replaced the older Central Semitic forms of the 'one' in 'eleven', which we can reconstruct as masculine **ʿist-ān-a* and feminine **ʿist-ay-a*.

## 3.0. The 'Teen' Word

The masculine and feminine of both 'ten' and '-teen' reflect different stems. In 'ten', the stems follow the rules of chiastic concord, whereas the 'teen' word takes a feminine suffix only in the actual feminine form.[8] This gives us a set of forms like Classical Arabic *ʿašar-at-* 'ten (M)', *ʿašr-* 'ten (F)', *ʿašar-a* '-teen (M)', and *ʿašr-*

[7] This contamination may have been triggered by the already close resemblance between the feminine oblique forms, **ʿist-ay-a* and **θint-ay*, and then spread to the rest of the paradigm after the new **ʿist-ay* was analysed as *one-OBL* with no identifiable gender marker.

[8] This is presumably because 'ten' takes a plural noun, while the higher numbers, including the teens, originally took the singular. Chiastic concord is limited to numerals which take plurals.

*at-a* '-teen (F)'. The masculine stem can unproblematically be reconstructed as **ʿaśar(-at)-* based on these Arabic forms together with Biblical Hebrew *ʿăśār-ā* 'ten (M)', *ʿāśār* '-teen (M)' and related forms in non-Central Semitic.

The feminine 'teen' word in Northwest Semitic is special in two regards. Comparing Biblical Hebrew *ʿɛśr-ē* to Classical Arabic *ʿašr-at-a*, we see discrepancies both in the vowel of the first syllable and in the feminine suffix. The Hebrew forms are supported by the other Northwest Semitic languages, when these attest the relevant features: note especially Syriac *-ʿ(e)sr-e*.

The **i* vowel seen in the Northwest Semitic stem was probably also present in feminine 'ten', although it cannot be distinguished from **a* there due to the effects of stress and vowel epenthesis, cf. Biblical Hebrew *ʿéśɛr*, Syriac *ʿsar*, both < **ʿiśr-* or **ʿaśr-* (for Hebrew *ɛ* from **i* in this position, cf. Suchard 2019, 141–67). The **i* vowel is once again unambiguously present in the related word 'twenty': Biblical Hebrew *ʿɛśr-īm*, Syriac *ʿesr-in*. In this numeral, we also find it attested in Arabic and Geʿez: *ʿišr-ū/ī-na* and *ʿəśr-ā*, respectively. As the other decades are transparently derived from the feminine numerals 'three'–'nine', it is likely that Hebrew and Aramaic preserve the older form of '-teen (F)' compared to Arabic and that their words for 'ten (F)' go back to **ʿiśr-*. Arabic *ʿašr-*, as well as Geʿez *ʿaśru*, and—probably—Akkadian *ešer*, has undergone contamination of the masculine stem **ʿaśar-*.[9]

[9] The stem allomorphy between masculine **ʿaśar-* and feminine **ʿiśr-* may have been the model for the secondary set of feminine cardinal

The Hebrew and Aramaic form of the suffix has previously been identified (thus still Blau 2010, §4.5.1.9) with the Arabic *ʾalif maqṣūrah*, an unstressed *-ā* or (in some varieties) *-ē* suffix spelled ى and reflecting **-ay-*, as in احدى *ʾiḥd-ā* alt. *ʾiḥd-ē* < **ʾiḥd-ay-* 'one (F)'. This identification cannot be squared with the data from Ugaritic, where we find *ʿšr-h* with what is almost certainly a consonantal **h* (a difficulty which Blau duly notes).[10] Tropper (2000, §62.201) sees three ways to explain the form with *-h*. Either it constitutes a separate feminine suffix, morphologically distinct from *-t*; or it is a terminative (corresponding to the Hebrew 'locative *he*'); or, again, it might represent a phonetic development of **-at* > **-ah*. The last option has Tropper's preference. But this sound change depends on the teens having had a zero ending, while we have reconstructed **-a*, making this an unattractive solution. I agree that the second option, interpreting *-h*

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numerals in Geʿez, shaped like *śəls* 'three (F)', *rəbʿ* 'four (F)', etc. (Tropper 2002, §43.12). These probably do not explain the origin of **ʿiśr-* itself, as they appear to be a fairly recent innovation: cf. the lack of assimilation in *səds* 'six (F)' compared to inherited *səssu*. The regular zero (NOM-GEN)/*-a* (ACC) inflection of the *CəCC* numerals also looks less archaic than the uninflecting *-u* ending of the feminine numerals 'six'–'ten' (no longer visible in *samāni* 'eight' < **θamāniy-u*). This *-u* presumably derives from the Proto-Semitic diptotic nominative **-u* (Suchard 2023), cf. the *-u* (NOM-GEN)/*-a* (ACC) inflection of the masculine numerals, like *śalast-u/a* 'three (M)', reflecting Proto-Semitic **-u* (NOM)/**-a* (OBL); word-finally, **-u* did not shift to *ə* in Geʿez, instead merging with **-ū* (Al-Jallad 2014).

[10] Ugaritic also attests *ʿšr-t*, with the same secondary distribution of *-t* as the digits (see fn. 3 above).

as the terminative, is unlikely, because it is both limited to the feminine and vocalised differently in Hebrew and Aramaic (for the terminative in Aramaic, see Butts 2022), where the terminative is unstressed *-ā*, not *-ē*. This leaves the first option, that of a distinct feminine ending.

Tropper rejects this possibility, on the grounds that no such feminine ending is attested elsewhere either in Ugaritic or in other Semitic languages. But perhaps it is. Based on the vocalisation in Tiberian Biblical Hebrew and Syriac as a consistently stressed final **-ē*,[11] the consonantal *-h* found in Ugaritic allows us to reconstruct the suffix as **-ihV̆* (cf. Suchard 2019, 244). In Classical Arabic, a common form of the demonstrative pronoun 'this (F)' is *hāðihī*. As the corresponding masculine is *hāðā*, everything following the *ð* functions as a gender suffix. While the final vowel is pronounced long, it is not reflected in the consonantal spelling هذه. The same suffix occurs on the rarer forms ذه *ðihī* and ته *tihī* (also *ðih* and *tih*), both also 'this (F)', where it is also spelled defectively. The defective spelling of a long vowel preceded by *h* and a short vowel is exactly the same as that of the third person masculine singular suffixed pronoun following a short vowel, e.g., به *bi-hī* 'in him', ابنه *ibnu-hū* 'his son'. This latter suffix is historically short **-hu*, which accounts for the defective spelling. In pause, both the final vowel of the third person masculine singular

[11] In Babylonian Hebrew, the word appears as *ʿaśrē* and *ʿaśrō* (Yeivin 1985, 1112). The *a* in the first syllable regularly corresponds to Tiberian *segol*. The final *-ō* in the second form is explained by Yeivin as a graphical error, as the Babylonian *tsere* and *ḥolem* are quite similar in appearance, both consisting of two dots above the letter (עשׂרה versus עשׂרה).

suffix and that of the feminine pronouns in *-ihī* is dropped,[12] further supporting their origin in short vowels. Apparently, the dialect that supplied these readings underwent a sound change of **-V̆hV̆ > -V̆hV̄*, lengthening short vowels following a short vowel and *h*, while the dialect on which the spelling is based kept this vowel short or lost it. The feminine suffix in the demonstratives *t-ihī*, *ð-ihī*, and *hāð-ihī* would, similarly, seem to go back to **-ihi*, which matches our reconstructed feminine suffix in the Northwest Semitic 'teen' word.

The traditional explanation for the Arabic forms is that the *h* arose through pausal aspiration (Lane 1863 *s.v.* ذا), with *ðihī* < **ðihi* < *ðih*, etc., deriving from the similarly attested demonstratives *ðī* and *tī*. But given the frequent pre-nominal position of the demonstrative in Arabic, e.g., *hāðihī ad-dunyā* 'this world' (Q 28.42), it seems unlikely that it would occur utterance-finally often enough for such a generalisation of the pausal form to occur. Moreover, as with *-h* in the Ugaritic 'teen' word, there is no reason why the *h* should be limited to the feminine. Masculine *hāðā* could easily have yielded ***hāðah(ā)* in the same way, yet this form does not exist.

Supporting evidence for **-ihi* as a feminine demonstrative suffix comes, once again, from Syriac. Like some forms of Classical Arabic, Syriac added **hā-* to the demonstrative pronouns. Based on the most common shape of the feminine singular near demonstrative, represented by Biblical Aramaic *dā*, this should yield Syriac *ho-ḏo*, and this is in fact the form when the pronoun

[12] I am grateful to Marijn van Putten for calling my attention to this point (personal communication).

is followed by a copular clitic: *hoḏo=y* ‘this (F) is’. The form *dā* is similarly preserved in the interrogative pronoun *aydo* ‘which? (FSG)’. The feminine singular demonstrative when not followed by *=y*, however, is *hoḏe*. The unexpected *-e*, spelled *-ʾ*, is both written and pronounced exactly the same as the feminine *-e* in *-ʿ(e)sr-e* ‘-teen (F)’. It may be, then, that the independent form *hoḏe* reflects **hā-ð-ihi*, just as proposed above for its Arabic counterpart. If that is the case, **-ihi* is attested as a feminine suffix on demonstrative pronouns both in Arabic and in Syriac, making the postulated **-ihV̆* of the feminine ‘teen’ word less isolated.

The ultimate origin of this morpheme remains uncertain. Based on its meaning, we might think of a reduced form of the demonstrative pronoun of far deixis **hĭ̯a* ‘that (F), she’. In that case, the suffix cannot be Proto-Semitic in origin, but must have grammaticalised after the Proto-West-Semitic change of **s* to **h* at word boundaries (Al-Jallad 2015).

The feminine ‘teen’ word with the suffix **-ihi* is only attested in Northwest Semitic. Arabic reflects **ʿiśr-at-a* instead. This form of the ‘teen’ word, containing the far more common feminine suffix **-at-*, can easily have been created analogically. The use of a different feminine suffix on ‘-teen (F)’ from that used with the digits also sits well with the different syntax of the numbers ‘three’–‘ten’ and the teens, which Arabic does attest. Together with the presence of the feminine suffix **-ihi* in Arabic demonstrative pronouns, this supports a Central Semitic reconstruction of ‘-teen (F)’ as **ʿiśr-ihi*.

## 4.0. Conclusion

Based on the reconstruction of the Proto-Semitic numeral 'one' as *ʿ*istān-* (M)/*ʿ*istay-* (F), of the ending on both parts of the teens (except the digit in 'twelve') as *-*a*, and of the feminine 'teen' word as *ʿ*iśrihi*, we can now reconstruct the Central Semitic teen numerals as in Table 2. In Northwest Semitic, 'eleven' changed to *ʿ*ist-ā$^{ʔ}$/ay ʿaśara* (M), *ʿ*ist-ā$^{ʔ}$/ay ʿiśrihi* (F) due to contamination of 'twelve'. The word for '-teen (F)' in Northwest Semitic can securely be reconstructed as *ʿ*iśrihi*, but it is debatable how old this form is. If it is also a Northwest Semitic innovation, it should be replaced by *ʿ*iśrata* in the reconstructions given here.

Table 2. The reconstructed Central Semitic numerals 'eleven'–'nineteen'

| meaning | masculine | feminine |
|---|---|---|
| 'eleven' | *ʿistāna ʿaśara | *ʿistaya ʿiśrihi |
| 'twelve' | *θn-ā$^{ʔ}$/ay ʿaśara | *θ(i)n(a)t-ā$^{ʔ}$/ay ʿiśrihi |
| 'thirteen' | *śalāθ(a)ta ʿaśara | * śalāθa ʿiśrihi |
| 'fourteen' | *ʾarbaʿ(a)ta ʿaśara | *ʾarbaʿa ʿiśrihi |
| 'fifteen' | *ẖam(i)s(a)ta ʿaśara | * ẖam(i)sa ʿiśrihi |
| 'sixteen' | *sidθata ʿaśara | *sidθa ʿiśrihi |
| 'seventeen' | *sabʿata ʿaśara | *sabʿa ʿiśrihi |
| 'eighteen' | *θamāniyata ʿaśara | *θamāniya ʿiśrihi |
| 'nineteen' | *tisʿata ʿaśara | *tisʿa ʿiśrihi |

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# THE GENDER OF PAIRED BODY PARTS IN SEMITIC*

*Na'ama Pat-El*

Gender is a morphosyntactic feature, or, more specifically, an agreement feature. Typically, one can identify the existence of gender with its various values through evidence from agreement patterns. Gender is unique as a feature: unlike number, each noun normally has only one value and it has no access to other values; in other words, it is invariant (Corbett and Fedden 2016). But how is gender assigned? Gender does not correspond to a straightforward formal or semantic interpretation; it is not interpretable outside of the grammatical system (Aquaviva 2020, 50).

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Abbreviations used in this paper: D = dual; F = feminine; JBA = Jewish Babylonian Aramaic; M = masculine; MSA = Modern Standard Arabic; OA = Old Assyrian; OAkk = Old Akkadian; OB = Old Babylonian; PL = plural; RH = Rabbinic Hebrew; S = singular.

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In canonical systems, where gender is maximally an agreement feature, gender cannot be derived entirely based on semantics—again, unlike number. Non-semantic gender is assigned either arbitrarily[1] or based on morphological[2] and phonological factors. However, grammatical gender of nouns in any language with such a system has a semantic core; namely, a subset of nouns is assigned gender on the basis of animacy, humanness, social gender, and/or biological sex (Kramer 2020, 47).

In Semitic, nouns which are assigned feminine gender may be marked with specific suffixes (*-*at*, *-*t*). Unmarked inanimate nouns, however, may be either feminine or masculine, and gender assignment is largely arbitrary (Watson 2008, 197-98). Referent-based gender, namely gender that matches biological sex, is assigned to humans and to animate nouns, to the latter in cases

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[1] This can be seen in Hebrew nouns which share a pattern, but differ in gender, e.g., *qīr* 'wall (M)' and *ʿīr* 'town (F)', *kəʾēḇ* 'pain (M)' and *bəʾēr* 'well (F)'. This is also true for Semitic more broadly, e.g., **ʾarṯ* 'land (F)' vs **raʾs* 'head (M)'.

[2] E.g., in German, nouns with the suffix *-schen* are neuter: *Mann* 'man, (M)', but *Männchen* 'little man (NT)'. In Semitic, the use of final *-t* marks a noun as feminine, e.g., Hebrew דֶּלֶת 'door (F)' and קֶשֶׁת 'bow (F)' and (and later, Jibbali *but* 'house [F]'), even if the morpheme's origin is not the same as the feminine suffix *-t*. Consider, in this vein, Hebrew infinitives of I-weak roots, like שֶׁבֶת 'sit' and דַּעַת 'know'. They present superficially as morphologically feminine, but see הִנֵּה מַה־טּוֹב וּמַה־נָּעִים שֶׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם־יָחַד 'how nice and pleasant is the gathering of siblings together' (Ps. 133.1), where the infinitive triggers masculine singular agreement (see also Prov. 21.19; 25.24).

where gender has real-world relevance. Thus, gender is referential for domesticated animals, like 'goat', but generally not for wild animals, like 'bear'.[3] We can define referent-based agreement as semantic, and non-referent-based gender as lexical.[4]

In this paper I will address the gender of paired body parts in Semitic, namely nouns denoting body parts that occur naturally in pairs in the human body, and enquire whether they are assigned semantic gender. Nouns denoting these parts in the Semitic languages are described in the scholarly literature as having two unique properties. First, they may retain dual morphology, even when such a category is no longer productive in the language, e.g., Hebrew *raḡlayim* 'legs'; Akkadian *upnānu* 'the hollows of the hand'. Second, there is broad consensus that these nouns are as a rule feminine, although no wide-ranging comparative study has established as much (e.g., Albrecht 1896, 73; Brockelmann 1908–1913,

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[3] Such nouns may trigger masculine gender, even when their referent is feminine, or vice-versa. For example, Hebrew דֹּב שַׁכּוּל 'a bear (M) bereaved of offspring' (2 Sam. 17.8; Hos. 13.8; Prov. 17.12). See also וַתֵּצֶאנָה שְׁתַּיִם דֻּבִּים (2 Kgs 2.24), where only numerical and verbal morphology indicate that the bears are feminine. For further examples of this phenomenon in the history of Hebrew, see Dubnov (2011). The category of 'domesticated animals' may be dependent on societal conventions. For example, Dhofari Arabic distinguishes lexically between a male cat (*ʿurrī*) and a female cat (*sinnāra*) (Davey 2016, 77), while Modern Hebrew does not make such a lexical distinction, and the feminine is derived from the masculine. Of course, a feminine noun can be regularly derived from a masculine via suffixation of the feminine morpheme: Arab. *kalb-* 'dog > *kalb-at-* 'bitch'.

[4] By lexical, I mean that gender is assigned arbitrarily and has a purely grammatical function.

I:422b; Bauer 1914, 371; Moscati 1980, 86; Waltke and O'Connor 1990, 103, §6.4.1; von Soden 1995, 92, §60d; Kaye 2009, 571; Blau 2010, 263, §4.4.2.3; Rubin 2010, 34; Hasselbach 2014 fn. 51). Holger Gzella goes so far as to refer to this phenomenon as "the common principle that paired body parts are feminine in Semitic languages throughout" (2007, 561). Indeed, the most common examples, 'eye', 'hand', and 'ear', are feminine across most languages that retain gender as a functional category.[5]

Which of the semantic features of these paired body part nouns makes them feminine is not clear. The broader category of 'body parts', many of whose members are also unmarked nouns, is not inherently feminine. Body parts which do not appear in pairs can be masculine,[6] **raʾs-* 'head (M)', **pū-* 'mouth (M)', **kisaːd-* 'neck (M)', **ʾanp-* 'nose (M)', or feminine, **baṭn* 'abdomen (F)', **ʾiṣbaʿ* 'finger (F)', **svnn* 'tooth (F)',[7] **lisān* 'tongue (F)'. So the

[5] There are, however, exceptions here too. Akkadian *idu* 'hand, arm, side' has common gender and Hebrew several times treats the cognate יָד as masculine, e.g., וְיָדֵי מֹשֶׁה כְּבֵדִים 'Moses's hands were heavy' (Exod. 17.12); while regularly feminine, Hebrew עַיִן 'eye' also has common gender, for example שִׁבְעָה עֵינָיִם 'seven (M) eyes' (Zech. 3.9); the noun in the phrase עינא בישא 'evil eye' in some Jewish Aramaic dialects is also masculine.

[6] Albrecht (1896, 72) argues that they are all masculine, but that would be an exaggeration.

[7] A possible explanation for the gender of 'finger' and 'tooth' is that there are two sets of fingers (left and right) and two sets of teeth (upper and lower) and therefore, dual; this seems to be an *ex post facto* explanation, however, as the Semitic nouns are singular, not collective. In other words, their referent is a single digit or tooth, not a set.

association of paired body parts with feminine gender is specifically tied to the observed number of items in a typical body.[8] However, paired items are not feminine in general; temporal nouns, where lexicalised dual forms are common in some Semitic languages, are not specifically feminine. Some lexemes with lexicalised dual are masculine, e.g., **yawm* 'day (M)', **wariḫ* 'month (M)', while others are feminine, e.g., **sanat* 'year (F)'. The claim under investigation, therefore, concerns a very specific and restricted subset of nouns that both indicate body parts and come in natural groups of two. This phenomenon is quite peculiar, since aside from nouns denoting animals or humans with biological sex, paired body parts are the only semantic group that is thought to constitute an inherently feminine feature, thereby affording them referential gender. There are no such claims about any other inanimate semantic group.

For some scholars, the implication of the observation that paired body parts are feminine is that there is a causal connection between morphology and gender assignment. Bauer (1914) suggested that the assignment of feminine gender to paired body parts is a result of reinterpretation of the dual suffix **-ā* as a feminine plural, which is also **ā,* at least in the verbal system. Thus

[8] The alleged gender/paired body part connection is not attested in other languages with an active dual; for example, in Sanskrit, most paired body parts are masculine: *hasta* 'hand (M)'; *pāṇi* 'hand (M)'; *bāhu* 'arm (M/F)'; *bhuja* 'arm (M)'; *akṣi/locana/netra/nayana* 'eye (NT)'; *karṇa* 'ear (M)'; *śrotra* 'ear (NT)'; *jaṅghā* 'leg, shank (F)'; *jānu* 'knee (NT)'; *ūru* 'thigh (M)'; *gulpha* 'ankle (M)'; *aṅghri* 'foot (M)'; *pāda* 'foot (M)'. I am grateful to my colleague Donald R. Davis for his assistance with the Sanskrit evidence.

**yaqtulā yadā* 'two hands killed' is misinterpreted as FP **yaqtulā*, whose singular is therefore **taqtul yadum* 'one hand killed'. The problem with Bauer's proposal is twofold. First, this kind of reinterpretation should have happened in all cases of dual, if indeed the dual and FP are identical, and not be restricted to only a specific semantic subset. Second, it is more likely that in proto-Semitic, feminine plural verbs did not end with **-ā*, but rather with **-na* (Huehnergard 2005, 169–70). The feminine plural suffix **-ā* in Akkadian, Ethiopic, and Aramaic is better explained as a result of a four-part analogy with the stative/suffix conjugation:[9] 3MP *qatl-ū* : 3FP *qatl-ā* :: 3MP *yaqtul-ū* : 3FP X < *yaqul-ā*. The dual and FP were thus not homomorphemic in proto-Semitic and the reinterpretation proposed by Bauer is, therefore, unlikely.

In a more recent article, Hasselbach (2007, 132–33) suggests the opposite process, namely that the feminine gender of paired body parts is original and the dual developed secondarily. According to Hasselbach, the original feminine nominal plural in pre-proto-Semitic was **-ā*. It was later affixed with *-t*, which was interpreted as a feminine marker to create the suffix used in all attested Semitic languages **-ā-t*. This development allowed feminine plurals to host case suffixes, which **-ā-* was not able to do. The old feminine plural morpheme **-ā*, without the feminine suffix, was reinterpreted as a dual, differentiating it from the new feminine plural morpheme, **-āt* and assuming a new role. Thus,

[9] Note that the suffix *-ā* is restricted to predicative FP adjectives, while attributive FP adjectives terminate in *-āt-*.

Hasselbach suggests, the suffix *-*ā* on paired body parts, originally simply marking feminine plural, was now interpreted as nominative dual.

There are a number of problems with this hypothesis. For example, there is no obvious reason why only paired body parts would retain the original feminine plural suffix *-*ā*, once a new feminine plural had come into use. Furthermore, the dual morpheme in Semitic is attached *after* the feminine singular, but the feminine plural is attached *instead of* the feminine singular, e.g., OA FS *raqq-at-um* 'fine garment', but *raqq-at-ān* 'two fine garments' (CCT 5, 18b:10), while the plural is *raqq-āt-um*; similarly Hebrew feminine singular אַמָּה *ʾamm-ā* 'cubit', but feminine dual אַמָּתַיִם *ʾamm-āt-ayim* 'two cubits' (Exod. 25.10), while the plural is אַמּוֹת *ʾamm-ot*.[10] Furthermore, the dual morpheme is internally case-marked (OA nom. *-ān*, oblique *-ēn*), like the masculine plural, while the feminine plural hosts case endings, like singular nouns. Given the different position and morphological behaviour of these morphemes, it is unlikely that the dual morpheme and the feminine plural morpheme had the same historical origin.

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[10] Other issues that remain unexplained are how the suffix *-*āt*, an originally feminine plural according to Hasselbach, became gender-neutral (Pat-El 2021). Furthermore, not all nouns referring to paired body parts select *-*āt* as their plural, even if they are feminine; in Hebrew among the nouns that select *-īm* as plural are *rɛ̄ḡɛl* 'foot (F)' and *ləḥī* 'cheek, jaw (F)'. Note also that in Akkadian, nouns in the dual have feminine agreement, since the verb lost dual inflection post-Old Akkadian. This is an indication that, if anything, feminine is secondarily associated with the dual, not vice versa. For an early discussion of the origin of the Semitic dual, see Fontinoy (1969, ch. 2).

These proposed reconstructions are based on the hypothesis that paired body parts are always feminine, a hypothesis that, as I have outlined above, is the consensus view among Semitists. In this paper I set out to review the evidence to confirm or reject this hypothesis. I aim to address two questions: (1) are the Semitic languages a 'unicorn', the sole example of a gender system that assigns gender based on the typical distribution of the referent in nature? (2) Is there a connection between duals and gender?

I will begin by examining the evidence in Semitic and point to cases where nouns denoting paired body parts are not feminine, or whose gender fluctuates between the different languages and/or dialects. The evidence does not support the hypothesis that paired body parts are as a rule feminine. I will follow with a brief discussion of grammatical gender assignment to substantiate my conclusion that paired body parts are assigned random gender, not referential gender.

Two issues need to be noted from the outset. First, throughout the attested history of the Semitic languages, gender assignment in the same language changed. For example, Procházka (2004, 239) notes that the only nouns which are consistently feminine across all Arabic dialects are 'eye', 'ear', 'hand', and 'foot', which constitute the basic senses and locomotion;[11] however, the majority of nouns denoting body parts in modern Arabic dialects are masculine. In Hebrew, the noun חֹפֶן 'hollow of the hand' was

[11] This is similar to a list Streck (2010, 296) provides for OB, which includes also the non-paired 'finger' and 'tooth'.

feminine all the way up to the early twentieth century.[12] In modern Hebrew, however, the word is masculine.[13] It is not clear what mechanism causes changes in gender assignment, but gender shifting is indicative that speakers do not associate gender with semantics. Second, many nouns referring to body parts in Semitic are primary, namely they are not derived, do not have a verbal root associated with them, and are not morphologically marked for gender (Fox 1998, 6).[14]

The sample presented below includes nouns with significant gender fluctuation across the family. When different languages reflect conflicting genders for the same proto-Semitic lexeme, sometimes even reflecting internal variation, it is not obvious which gender is original and which is secondary. If we accept the hypothesis that paired body parts are assigned feminine gender as a matter of principle, we will need to account for the change, namely why would what we assume is a referential gender switch to a non-referential gender.

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[12] ככל דברי המשא והחזון האלה נשא דון קישוט על חופָן מלאה 'All these prophecies, Don Qixote declared over a full (FS) hand' (Bialik, translation of *Don Qixote*, 1912).

[13] For example, on the website of the Academy of the Hebrew Language the word is defined thus: חופָן הוא חלל כף היד כשהיא כפופה '*ḥofen* is (MS) the space in the palm of the hand when it is curved' (https://tinyurl.com/u82vbtkz).

[14] Fox (1998, 6) also suggests that the preponderance of **qatil* to denote body parts (paired and non-paired) may lend support to the hypothesis that patterns have discrete semantic values.

## 1.0. Evidence

Since most of the nouns in the relevant category are not marked for gender, establishing gender must rely on the syntax of the noun in context, namely the type of agreement it solicits.[15] Given our patchy textual evidence, it is not always possible to verify agreement, but wherever evidence is available, I will provide such context, and note when there is no such context. Proto-Semitic etymology will be provided when available. The most common nouns, 'eye', 'ear', 'hand', and 'leg', are consistently feminine in Semitic; therefore, they will not be treated here. The nouns selected are those where, by and large, the same Semitic noun is reflected in most of the languages in the sample. The list could be expanded, of course, but the following is sufficient to serve as proof of concept.

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[15] Gender is not discussed in major comparative lexical works on the Semitic languages. Militarev and Kogan (2000) do not discuss gender at all in their etymological dictionary, nor do they specify it when listing lexemes. Similarly, most studies of body parts do not mention gender (e.g., Dietrich 1844; Leslau 1945).

## 1.1. Nostril (**naḫīr-*)[16]

Hebrew – masculine and feminine[17]—the noun is attested in BH (Job 41.12) and QH (11Q10 36.5), but without evidence for its agreement pattern; mascuine: ועשה לו שני נחירין של אף 'He made him two (M) nostrils' (Shabbetai Donnolo, Hakmoni tenth c.); feminine—שתי עינים ושתי אזנים ושתי נחיריים ופה 'two eyes and two ears and two (F) nostrils and a mouth' (Sefer Yeṣira, fifth c. [?]).

Ugaritic – unattested.

Aramaic – masculine[18]—בתקליא נקיב נחירא 'the nose is pierced with a snare' (Targum Job 40.24); Syr. ܬܪܝܢ ܢܚܝܪܐ ܕܕܗܒܐ 'two (M) golden nostrils' (Pesh. Zech 4.12).

Akkadian – masculine—*naḫīrī-šu ša imitti salit* 'his right (M) nostril is notched (?) (M)' (HSS 15 112.2).

Arabic – masculine—a slightly different pattern from the same root, مَنْخِرُ, is treated as masculine in *Aṣ-Ṣaḥḥāḥ fī l-Luġa*: إذا ضاق مَنْخِرُهُ عن نَفَسْه 'if his nostril is narrowed (M)'; other dictionaries do not discuss gender.[19]

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[16] In Modern South Arabian, the word refers to the nose and is masculine (Soqotri *náḥrər*, Hobyot *nəxrir*). Simeone-Senelle and Lonnet (1991, 1455) mention *finɔs* 'nostril (M)' for Soqotri.

[17] It is masculine in Modern Hebrew: קושי בנשימה דרך האף או דרך נחיר אחד 'difficulty breathing through the nose or through one (M) nostril' (Medical website; https://tinyurl.com/5dvtmpmt).

[18] This lexeme shifted to mean 'nose' in some dialects. See also Kogan (2015, 379).

[19] Modern Arabic dialects use *munḫār/minḫār* (plural *manāḫīr*), which is usually masculine.

## 1.2. Eyelid[20]

Hebrew – masculine—BH וְתֵרַדְנָה עֵינֵינוּ דִמְעָה וְעַפְעַפֵּינוּ יִזְלוּ־מָיִם ‘our eyes will tear up, and our eyelids will shed (M) water’ (Jer. 9.17).

Ugaritic[21] – no signs of agreement, listed as masucline in *DUL* 170.

Aramaic – masculine and feminine—*šakin* – masculine: ונטר יתהון מה היך דנטר שיכנה בבה דעיינה ‘he protected them as the eyelid protects (M) the pupil of the eye’ (Neof., Deut. 32.10); feminine: נטרינון היכמה דשכינה נטרא בבי דעייניה ‘they protect us as the eyelid protects (F) the pupil of the eye’ (Ps.-J. Deut. 32.10).[22]

Arabic – masculine—a different term is used, جَفْنُ, and it is treated as masculine. *Lisān al-ʿArab* treats it as masculine in all its different meanings; for example: وهذا الجَفْنُ غير الجَفْنِ من الكَرْمِ ‘and this (M) *jafn* is not *jafn l-karm* (grapevine)’.

Akkadian – there is no specific word attested for this body part whose core meaning is ‘eyelid’; the two nouns used are *quliptu* ‘cover, bark (marked F)’ and *kappi īni* ‘palm of the eye (F)’.

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[20] This lexeme has no obvious proto-Semitic etymon.

[21] Kogan (2015, 285) suggests that *ʿpʿp* is proto-Canaanite and means ‘pupil of the eye’. The word does not occur outside Hebrew and Ugaritic (which I do not consider Canaanite) and could indeed be considered Northwest Semitic.

[22] This term in NENA is largely masculine: C. Urmi *xasət ʾayna* (Khan 2016, III:12); J. Urmi *xasət ena* (Khan 2008, 386); Zakho *elpapa* (Yona 1999).

### 1.3. Arm (**ðirāʿ-*)

Hebrew – masculine and feminine—masculine: BH וַיָּפֻזוּ זְרֹעֵי יָדָיו ‘his arms are agile (M)’ (Gen. 49.24), וּזְרֹעַי עַמִּים יִשְׁפֹּטוּ ‘my arms will judge (M) nations’ (Isa. 51.5); feminine: בִּזְרוֹעַ נְטוּיָה ‘with an outstretched (F) arm’ (Exod. 6.6).

Ugaritic – there is no evidence for agreement; listed as feminine in *DUL* 285.

Aramaic – masculine and feminine—feminine: דרעיהא מא שפירן ‘her arms—how beautiful (F)’ (1QapGen 20.4); masculine: Syr. ܐܦܩ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܝܕ ܪܡܝܐ ‘I will lead them out of his land with a raised (M) hand’ (Pesh. Exod. 6.1); וגלגיל ית אבנא בחדא מן אדרעוי ‘he rolled the rock with one (M) of his hands’ (Ps.-J. Gen. 29.10); וּבִיַד תַּקִיפָא וּבאַדרָע מְרַמַם ‘with a strong hand and a raised (M) arm’ (Onq. Jer. 32.21).[23]

Arabic – masculine and feminine—in Classical Arabic it is feminine, but in MSA it is both; Lane (121) reports that even traditional Arab dictionaries are conflicted about the gender, with the meaning ‘cubit’ probably feminine; Penrice marks this noun as having both genders, as does *Lisān al-Arab* (أُنثى وقد تُذَكَّر).

[23] The noun is also masculine in some NENA, e.g., C. Urmi *drana* (Khan 2016, 14). In Zakho, *zanda* is feminine (Yona 1999).

Akkadian – *dura'u* appears only in NA and is likely a loan from West Semitic (*CAD* D 191); the typical words for arm are *idu* (M/F) (*CAD* I/J 10) and *aḫu* (F): Á-*šu ina siqiānīšu šaknat* 'his arm lays (F) in his lap' (*CAD* A1 205); Á-*ki mut-tabbilāti* 'your gesticulating (?) arms (F)' (*CAD* A1 205); both nouns are represented with the logogram Á, which may create some confusion.

## 1.4. Hollow of the hand (**ħupn-*)[24]

Hebrew – feminine—no evidence for agreement in BH, but the noun is listed as masculine in dictionaries of both BH and post-biblical Hebrew; RH – feminine: נמצאת חופנו שלמשה שמונה קמצים 'Moses's palm has (F) eight thumbs' (Gen. Rab. 5.7).

Aramaic – masculine and feminine—masculine: תרין חופנין מליין מיכלא 'two (M) handfuls filled with food' (Tg. Qoh. 4.6); חופנין ארבעה 'four (M) handfuls' (Lev. Rab. 216.7, 1); feminine: לגבר ליומא קמח חפן חדה 'for each man for each day, flour—one (F) handful' (*TAD* 6 9.5).

Ugaritic – no evidence for agreement; listed as masculine in *DUL* 362.

Arabic – حَفْنَة marked feminine in *Lisān al-Arab*: وحَفَنَ له من ماله حَفْنةً: أَعطاه إياها 'he gave him a handful of his money. He gave it (FS) to him.'

[24] The noun is attested in Sabaic as a definite dual (*ḥfnnhn*), gender unknown.

Akkadian – feminine[25]—*ibakkī-ma pêtā upnā-šu uṣallâ* 'he cried and prayed with his palms open (FP)' (Esarhaddon 33.oi6; see also Holma 1911, 118).

## 1.5. Testicle (**ʾisk*-)[26]

Hebrew – masculine אֶשֶׁךְ, but no direct early evidence for agreement.[27]

Ugaritic – *ůšk*, no evidence for agreement; listed as masculine in *DUL* 113.

Aramaic – in Syriac and JBA it is marked feminine: אשכתא; similarly in NENA *ʾəščita* (Yona 1999; Khan 2016, 14).

Arabic – the term used is different, خُصْيَة, which is marked feminine. See *Lisān al-Arab* إِذا رأَيْتُ خُصْيَةً مُعَلَّقَة 'if I saw an undescended (F) testicle'.

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[25] In Akkadian the noun has two meanings: hollow of the hand, with the plural *upnū*, which usually occurs in the dual (*upnān*), and a measure (handful), with the plural *upnātu*.

[26] The Modern South Arabian words are from other roots, mostly *ʾāgrēz* (F), but also *karaʿil* (M) in Soqotri (Simeone-Senelle and Lonnet 1991, 1461). Several languages mark this noun as morphologically feminine: Aramaic, Akkadian, and Ethiopic (*ʾəskit*), with Arabic using a different lexeme which is also marked feminine.

[27] The earliest clear indication of gender is in a tenth-century medical composition, *Medical Practice*, by Shabbetai Donnolo: ויש לו שילשול עם כאב האשכים הם המבושים 'and he has diarrhoea with pain in the testicles, which are (MPL) the privates'. This noun is masculine in Modern Hebrew, as an answer on the Hebrew academy website makes clear: אֶשֶׁךְ ופין הם ממין זכר 'testicle and penis are masculine' (https://tinyurl.com/bm7nvnph).

Akkadian *išku* – feminine—*lu ina ṣalte [iš-k]a šanīta tahtepi* ‘or in a fight she injures the other (F) testicle’ (KAV 1 i …87).

## 1.6. Breast (**θady-*)

Most words denoting female breasts are masculine.[28]

Hebrew – masculine[29]—BH וְשָׁדַיִם צַמְּקִים ‘and shriveled (M) breasts’ (Hos. 9.14); the noun continues to be treated as masculine throughout the history of Hebrew: מה שד זה תינוק טועם בו ‘what is a breast? A baby eats from it’ (b. Yoma 75a); כשם ששדים מניקים את התינוק ‘as breasts feed (M) the baby’ (Tanḥuma, Wayigash 3)

Ugaritic – masculine—*ỉ yd*ʿ *hrh . [ ̣ ] ṯdỉ* ‘her breast did not know (M) her conception’ (UDB1 13 31)

Aramaic – masculine—Syr. ܡܠܝܦ̈ܝܢ ‘the breasts which nourished (M) you’ (Pesh. Luke 11.27).

Arabic – masculine[30]—ثَدْيٌ مُقعَدٌ ‘a full (M) breast’ (Lane 333). *Lisān al-Arab* treats the noun as masculine, for example وهو للمرأَة والرجل أَيضاً، وجمعه أَثْدٍ وثُدِيّ ‘it (M) belongs to both woman and man, and its (M) plural is *ʾaṯdin* and *ṯudī*’.

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[28] The only exception is some Modern South Arabian languages, e.g., Soqotri *todʾi*, Hobyot *θoodə*, where the word is feminine (Naumkin and Kogan 2018, II:608; Nakano 2013, 11).

[29] When a numeral is used with this noun, it is the masculine variant (e.g., Song 4.5).

[30] This is true also in some modern dialects, e.g., Dhofari Arabic *θawīdāt* ‘breasts’ conditions masculine agreement (Davey 2016, 77 fn. 7).

Akkadian – a different lexeme is used, *tulû* (< **tulʿ*), which is masculine (Holma 1911, 46);[31] *ana* UBUR *ešši tunakkar-šū-ma* 'you will move it (=the baby) to a new (M) breast' (Labat 1951, 222, ex. 37).

## 1.7. Loin (**mVtn*-)[32]

Hebrew – masculine[33]—BH מָתְנֵיכֶם חֲגֻרִים 'your loins girded (M)' (Exod. 12.11); ומתניו חגורים מכנסי בד 'and his loins are girded (M) with cloth pants' (Josippon 66.351 [early tenth c.]).[34]

Ugaritic – *mtn*—there is no direct evidence for agreement; listed as masculine in *DUL* 592.[35]

Aramaic – masculine[36] – Mand מתניא גוויא (Drower and Macuch 1963, 257) 'inner loins'.

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[31] Less common nouns are *zîzu* (F) and *kirimmu* (M); see Holma (1911, 47–48).

[32] The word is masculine in Modern South Arabian as well (Simeone-Senelle and Lonnet 1991, 1466).

[33] In Modern Hebrew the lexeme has common gender: המתניים הכי צרים שראיתם 'the thinnest (M) waist you ever saw' (MAKO; https://tinyurl.com/yckmf9zh); הבחורה עם המותניים הצרות בעולם 'the girl with the thinnest (F) waist in the world' (Walla; https://tinyurl.com/2yjy95tb).

[34] Albrecht (1896, 78) concedes that this word is an exception to the rule, but suggests that the noun was perhaps originally feminine, but due to misunderstanding later attracted masculine agreement.

[35] There is a secondary feminine derivation, *mtnt*, with the same meaning, which may indicate that the basic noun is not feminine. Without direct evidence of agreement, however, this is impossible to confirm.

[36] Aramaic also uses a different lexeme, *ḥraṣ*, which is masculine.

Arabic – masculine and feminine—مَتْن refers to the side of the back; reported to have both genders in Steingass (953), and feminine in Kazimirski (1860, 1059). *Lisān al-Arab* reports both genders (والمَتْنُ الظَّهْرُ، يذكر ويؤنث).

Akkadian[37] – masculine—the typical word for loins/hips is *qablu*: *qablē-šu našû* 'the sides of his back were elevated (M)' (Labat 1951, 124, ln. 25).

## 1.8. Thigh (**saːq-*)

Hebrew – masculine and feminine—masculine: BH וְאֵת֙ שׁ֣וֹק הַתְּרוּמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר הוּנַ֖ף וַאֲשֶׁ֣ר הוּרָ֑ם 'and the thigh of the offering which was lifted (M) and raised (M)' (Exod. 29.27); feminine: QH ושוקיו ארוכות ודקות 'and his thighs are long (FPL) and lean (FPL)' (4Q186 f1ii.5); RH לוֹ תִּהְיֶה שׁוֹק הַיָּמִין לְמָנָה 'he will have (F) the right thigh as a portion' (m. Zevaḥ. 12.1).

Ugaritic – *šq*—no evidence for agreement, listed as masculine in *DUL* 826.

Aramaic – masculine and feminine—masculine: JBA גזירתינהו לשקך 'I cut (it [M]) your leg' (b. Bava Qama 81b); feminine: דיליה תהי שקא דימינא לחולק 'his will be (F) the right thigh as a portion' (Ps.-J. Lev. 7.33).[38]

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[37] The lexeme *matnu* 'tendon (M)' perhaps reflects a different etymon, related to Aramaic *mitna* 'cord (M)'.

[38] The noun *šaka* (< *šāqā*) is masculine in NENA (Khan 2016, 14).

Arabic – masculine and feminine—masculine: على سَاقٍ وَاحِدٍ 'on the one (M) thigh' (Lane 1472); feminine وَٱلْتَفَّتِ ٱلسَّاقُ بِٱلسَّاقِ 'one shank is twisted (F) with the other' (Q 75.29); on the basis of the Qurānic verse, *Lisān al-Arab* determines that the noun is feminine (ٱلسَّاقُ مؤنث).

Akkadian[39] – *sāqu* (only in OAkk and Babylonian) and *sīqu* (only in Assyrian) have unclear agreement.

## 1.9. Heel (**ʿaqib-*)

Hebrew – masculine—there is no direct evidence for agreement in BH; RH: נִיפְסַק עֲקֵיבוֹ 'its heel broke off (M)' (m. Kelim 26.4); בסנדל שיש לו עקב כשר ושאין לו עקב פסול 'in a sandal with an allowable (M) heel and no forbidden (M) heel' (m. Yev. 12.1).

Ugaritic – *ʿqb*—no evidence for agreement; listed as having both genders (?) in *DUL* 173.

Aramaic – masculine and feminine—masculine: Mandaic עקבה גנא ברקא 'his heel stamped (M) on the ground' (Drower and Macuch 1963, 356b); JBA עוקבי בארעא נקיש לי 'my heel tapped (M) on the ground' (Sokoloff 2002, 858); feminine: Syr. ܚܡܝܟ ܥܩܒ̈ܝܟ ܐܬܓܠ̈ܝ 'your heels were revealed (FP)' (Pesh. Jer. 13.22).

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[39] The sibilant of this noun in Akkadian should be /š/ if it has the same etymology as the West Semitic nouns. The use of /s/ is peculiar and may indicate a borrowing, despite the fact that it is attested already in Old Akkadian. Holma (1911, 134 fn. 5) suggests that this perhaps reflects an Assyrian origin.

Arabic – masculine and feminine—Penrice (99) and Nadwi (404) mark it as having both genders; Lane lists the noun as feminine, but provides examples where the agreement is clearly masculine: من أينَ كَان عَقِبُكَ 'where are you from?' (Lane 2100); Wehr suggests that the gender is dependent on the use; *Lisān Al-Arab* cites al-Azharī, who determines that the noun is feminine (الأَزهري: وعَقِبُ القَدَم وعَقْبُها: مؤَخَّرُها، مؤنثة) and elsewhere notes that the heel of a shoe is feminine too (وعَقِبُ النَّعْلِ: مُؤَخَّرُها، أُنْثى).

Akkadian – *eqbu*—unclear: while *eqbu* is used in Akkadian, the common word for 'heel' is *asīdu*, which is masculine: *šumma amēlu asīdā-šu purrur* 'if a man's heal is broken (M)' (*CAD* A2 330).

## 1.10. Ankle[40]

Hebrew – masculine and feminine—no evidence for agreement in BH; masculine: RH וקרסוליו וכנפיו חופין את רובו 'and his ankles and wings encircle (M) most of him' (t. Ḥul. 4.11); feminine: RH ארבע כנפים וקרסולים 'four (F) wings and ankles' (m. Ḥul. 3.7).[41]

Ugaritic – *ḥrẓp*—no evidence of agreement; listed as masculine in *DUL* 403.

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[40] Some Modern South Arabian languages use a potentially related word: Hobyot *ḳarṣin*. I suspect it is masculine, but I could not confirm it.

[41] The noun is masculine in Modern Hebrew; for example, from a medical forum: הקרסול עדיין נפוח ועדיין יש טיפה כאבים 'the heel is still swollen (M) and I have a bit of pain' (https://www.doctors.co.il/forum-11/message-454626/).

Aramaic – masculine—Syr. ܠܐ ܢܡܥܪ ܣܩܘܠܝ ‘my ankles will not falter (M)’ (Pesh. 2 Sam. 22.37).

Arabic – a different term, رُسْغُ, is treated as masculine—for example in *Lisān al-Arab*: الرُّسْغُ مُجْتَمَعُ الساقين والقدمين ‘the ankle is connecting (M) the legs and feet’; the same term is used for the wrist.

Akkadian – feminine—*šumma kiṣallum ša imittim palšat* ‘if the right ankle is perforated (F)’ (YOS 10 47.65).

## 2.0. Discussion and Conclusion

The data presented here shows not only that there are masculine paired body parts, but that gender assignment may be inconsistent and fluctuate, sometimes even within the same branch. While I have included in this paper only nouns with solid and broad attestation in multiple branches, there are further examples with attestation only in a subset of the languages, such as **kisl* ‘side, loin’, which is masculine in Hebrew, e.g., כל שכסליו יוצאין ‘any whose sides burst (M)’ (t. Bekh. 4.10), but feminine in Ugaritic, e.g., *ksl . tṯbr* ‘the shoulder should buckle (F)’ (UDB1 3 III:33); **laḥw* ‘cheek, jaw’, which is feminine in BH, e.g., לְחִי־חֲמוֹר טְרִיָּה ‘a fresh (F) donkey jaw’ (Judg. 15.15), but masculine in RH, e.g., ניטל לחי התחתון ‘the lower (M) jaw is removed (M)’ (m. Ḥul. 3b); **yarik* ‘thigh’, which is feminine in BH, e.g., אֶת־יֶרֶךְ נֹפֶלֶת ‘your drooping (F) thigh’ (Num. 5.21), and RH, e.g., יֶרֶךְ שֶׁגִּיד הַנָּשֶׁה בְּתוֹכָהּ ‘a side in which (F) the thigh tendon is’ (m. Ḥul. 7.2), but masculine in Ugaritic, e.g., *k ypṯḥ yrk hnd* ‘when this flank (=side) was opened (M)’ (KTU 1.143:3); etc.

The variation in gender makes reconstruction of a specific proto-Semitic gender value difficult. In principle, it is equally as possible that nouns with fluctuating gender were originally masculine and switched to feminine as the reverse. The phenomenon of gender switching has not been studied in Semitic, but at the very least the existence of switching indicates that speakers did not perceive paired body parts as belonging inherently to a specific gender.[42] This state-of-affairs supports the hypothesis that there is nothing in paired body parts which necessitates a specific gender. The fact that we encounter the feminine nouns 'hand', 'eye', 'ear', and 'leg' more often than other paired body parts should not lead us to conclude that *all* paired body parts share the same set of morpholexical features. The most logical explanation of the evidence presented here is that body parts, like most other nouns, do not have an inherent gender associated with their

[42] Bettega and D'Anna (2023) seem to argue the reverse:

> [i]t is interesting to note how concepts that tend to be conceived of as inherently feminine in Arabic retain their gender even in those dialects where they are referred to by means of a different lexical element. This is for instance the case of the F.SG noun *ḥarrāy* "sun" in Kordofanian Baggara Arabic. (ch. 2)

The examples they give of constituents of the physical world which are mostly feminine include 'sky' (**samaːy*) and 'rain' (**maṭar*), both of which are masculine in Canaanite, Ugaritic, and Aramaic. The Semitic word for 'sky' is also masculine in Akkadian. The noun 'rain' is expressed in Akkadian by several nouns with both genders. Interestingly, Bettega and D'Anna note that the gender of unmarked nouns depends on the dialect.

semantic category. The fact that many of them are feminine is a result of random distribution. This is most obvious in nouns referring to typical female body parts, e.g., 'breasts', which are grammatically masculine, or typical male body parts, e.g., 'foreskin' or 'beard',[43] which are grammatically feminine. If gender were assigned on the basis of semantics, nouns associated with biological sex should conform to the appropriate gender; yet they do not.

Granted, there is indeed a comparatively high proportion of feminine nouns among paired body parts, but uneven gender distribution is not unique to this semantic group. Other natural semantic categories also show a propensity for a specific gender; most nouns representing the elements, e.g., **ʾis* 'fire', **ʾarḍ* 'earth', are feminine, while celestial bodies, e.g., **kawkab* 'star', **wariḫ* 'moon', along with the cardinal directions, are masculine. This is also true for basic raw materials, e.g., **ṣūr* 'flint (M)', **ṭiṭṭ* 'wet clay (M)', **bāḍ* 'mud (M)', etc.[44] The only study known to me that attempts to connect gender to semantic categories is Albrecht (1896), who assigns a causal relation between feminine

[43] For example, Hobyot *ləhit*.

[44] See a longer list in Agmon (2010, 23–29).

gender and what he considers feminine features (maternity, fertility, etc.),[45] but even he is often stumped.[46]

An association of grammatical gender with meaning necessitates a theory of gender; in other words, we first must understand what gender is supposed to represents. Gender is what we call a system which organises nouns into inflectional classes, which in turn regulate the morphology of their modifiers (adjective, demonstrative, relative marker), pronominal referents, and predicates. As was noted at the beginning of this article, in the case of nouns denoting biological sex—a small and restricted category—the inflectional category corresponds to a feature of the real-world referent. All other nouns, if they do not carry specific morphological markers, are assigned gender randomly. The hypothesis that the gender of **ʿayn* 'eye' corresponds to a feature of its referent in the real world means that gender is more than an inflectional category—it is in fact a classifier. Classifiers correlate with the extralinguistic characteristics of nouns, and include not only 'animal', 'human', 'plant', etc., but also form, shape, and

[45] In general, discussions of gender assignment in Semitic concentrate on feminine, mostly unmarked feminine, and ignore masculine (Procházka 2004; Streck 2010; Bettega and D'Anna 2023). This may make some sense if we think about feminine as secondary or derivative, but where neither gender is morphologically marked, there is no reason to assume the priority of one or the other.

[46] For example, when trying to explain why some natural phenomena are feminine he notes "[d]er Grund dieser Auffassung ist unklar, jedenfalls sind sie nicht als still und verborgen, der Frau gleich waltend" (41). The work of Albrecht provides multiple examples of semantic groups where most nouns belong to one gender, but there are still many exceptions.

structure (Aikhenvald 2000, 82). Classifiers are by and large semantically transparent and follow the cultural concepts of their speakers. Since Semitic has only two markers, masculine and feminine, it seems *prima facie* impossible that assigning one or the other is semantically determined. Given that the number of nouns to which the term 'classifier' applies is a small, closed category, that there are only two such markers, and that the evidence provided in this paper is indicative that not all paired body parts belong to the same 'class', it is far more economical to describe the Semitic system in terms of nominal gender, where, with the typologically common exception of biological sex, gender is non-referential.

To conclude, the assumption that paired body parts in Semitic are inherently feminine falls apart on empirical grounds. While the majority of nouns denoting paired body parts are feminine, the extant uneven distribution of gender assignment is found with other semantic groups and, statistically, is to be expected. Typologically, assigning gender to inanimate nouns based on non-sex-related semantics, regardless of morphology, is unparalleled crosslinguistically. Furthermore, paired body parts do not share any morphological features which could account for their gender assignment. Given the evidence presented here, specifically, that there are masculine paired body parts, and, more generally, the typological distribution of gender, we must conclude that the assignment of gender in inanimate nouns is random. Consequently, theories utilising the gender of paired body parts to explain proto-Semitic morphology are contradicted by the data.

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# FIELDWORK: CHANCE, CHOICE, CHANGE*

*Janet C. E. Watson*

Geoffrey and I have many things in common, and perhaps the most salient is that we have both collected and worked on our own fieldwork data over several decades. As I returned recently from Dhofar, clutching a Laryngograph microprocessor, a laptop, and a digital audio recorder, my mind slipped back to the first

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days of fieldwork in the Yemen Arab Republic, and to how fieldwork practice, my fieldwork practice, and I, have changed. I had spent a month of my two-month trip helping my PhD student, Andrea Boom, with her work on the flora of Dhofar and its relationship with traditional culture. Would this have happened in my day? I have never written these words up outside my personal diaries and notebooks. Now, as I contemplate retirement, I feel it is time. I have adopted the sub-title from Blevins (2004) *Evolutionary Phonology*. It works for her theory. It works for my fieldwork journey.

My hands are cold as I sit to approach this, up in my attic in Leeds, on an early January morning. I have written it in my sleep and in my awakenings, kicking through the cold, wet leaves of a late December in Leeds, toes sensing the hot desert sand of northern Dhofar, the blue Salalah waves.

Chance, I think, began when I spoke to my favourite lecturer, Dr Gauthier Juynboll, after the award of my BA degree. I knew I wanted to study Arabic dialects. I knew I wanted to study in the Peninsula. That was as far as it went. I had been offered a place at Exeter University. He told me not to stay. He told me to contact Prof. Werner Diem in Cologne. I would have loved to study in Germany—a choice I didn't make. Prof. Diem suggested I contact Bruce Ingham at SOAS—a good suggestion and a good choice. I registered at SOAS for a Diploma in Linguistics in 1984, which I started that academic year. The choice of Yemen came through multiple avenues: I wanted a region that was predominantly rural (the Yemen Arab Republic had a population of

7,813,475 in 1985 of which 81.63 percent was rural[1]); I loved mountains; I wanted geographical diversity; I wanted a region that showed linguistic diversity. In the end, though, the choice was made for me when Louise Johnson, my friend and fellow student at Exeter told me, "Go to Yemen. I was born in Yemen." That was it. For all the objective academic reasons, the crucial decision was subjective.

Before setting off for fieldwork in Yemen, another opportunity presented itself. My friend, Diana/Khadija May, also studying at SOAS, introduced me to Abdullah al-Jarrash, a Yemeni from Ibb who was working towards his doctorate in Cardiff. This provided me with an entrance to his family in Ibb and his relations in al-Junayd.

The fieldwork began in November 1985, landing in Sanʿa, Yemen, armed with a first-class degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies from Exeter University, a Diploma in Linguistics from SOAS, a small cassette recorder,[2] my readings of Goitein (1943; 1960), Diem (1973), Jastrow (1984; 1986), a handful of anthropological works, and an arrogance both that I could manage on my own and, having studied Generative Grammar at SOAS, that language was separable from culture. I knew nothing. I spent fifteen months in Yemen, travelling between Sanʿa, the mountains of Raymah, Ibb, Hubaysh and al-Junayd. My PhD on the phonology and verbal morphology of three rural Yemeni dialects of Arabic was completed and examined in 1989 (Watson 1989).

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[1] https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/YEM/yemen/rural-population.

[2] I later used a reel-to-reel tape recorder loaned from SOAS.

With a PhD grant from the British Academy that would cover my Diploma year and two years of doctoral study, I attached myself to the British Organisation for Community Development (BOCD), the Yemen branch of the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), with connections to Oxfam, working on a feasibility study for women's literacy. That was my first mistake. I read avidly about literacy programmes and realised that, without first addressing the crucial question of what women would have to read at the end of the programme, without first asking what was being done for literacy on the local level, without understanding the local culture and people's expectations, any literacy programme was likely to fail. It did help me to travel, though, and I am very grateful to my development colleagues. It gave me the opportunity to stay in the western mountains in the centre of the Raymah governorate, al-Jabin, and to hear the dialect there—sketched tantalisingly by Werner Diem in his 1973 book. And opportunity—chance—is essential in fieldwork. I made mistakes—I remember in my arrogance walking around the ridge in al-Jabin and thinking I would be able to understand the dialect. I remember this years later when I spend the year in Sanʿa with my husband and children. James, who had spent two years in Sudan and had excellent abilities in Arabic, would say, "I understand nothing. I hear no Arabic here." And that was Sanʿa. In the *k*-dialect regions of Yemen, it was not just the *-k* ending for the first singular and second persons that was different. It was the phonology, the morphology, the syntax, and the lexicon. And I needed to be able to speak. My degree at Exeter equipped me with good reading and writing skills; listening and speaking,

though, were almost non-existent. And the Diploma did not help me much with phonetic transcription.

In those days, ethical consent was unheard of. Fieldworkers occasionally spoke of recording people without their knowledge, telling them (or not) afterwards. Risk assessment was unheard of. You seized every occasion. Recording was difficult. It was effectively impossible to explain the purpose of a doctoral research project to rural women, in particular, who had had no formal education. Men and women treated me with suspicion, and I lacked confidence. I also suffered from ADHD and depression. Not advisable attributes in a fieldworker. Most of my early work involved taking copious fieldnotes and working through them with local speakers.

I spent my early time in al-Jabin 'the brow', also written on the signposts الجبي, with the loss of final /n/, later in Kusmah and al-Jaʿfariyah. I stayed with BOCD colleagues in a Turkish fort on the brow. How different from Cairo, I thought! There it was assumed young women were out for a good time; here, as a woman, I would either be a doctor or a teacher. I chose 'teacher'. Walking in the early morning, smelling the bread from clay ovens, and seeing beneath me the clouds—that I will never forget, and probably never experience again. At night, with no light pollution once the domestic generators had been turned off around 9pm, I would look up and see the stars as large as apples. Utter joy. That I will never experience again. During the day, I would walk from settlement to settlement. Steep, sheer mountains, houses perched, and then, without warning, a green opening. The green

openings, like the Austrian alms, felt like a fairy tale. I had travelled previously—Germany, Burgenland in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Spain, France—but I had never done what I had always wished for: I had never travelled backwards in time. This felt like that. I would sit with women and girls in dark, barely lighted rooms, they dressed in velvet gowns adorned with the silver jewellery typical of Northern Yemen. I sought to find some common ground. What could I say that would lessen the cultural divide between us? I had a mother and a father. I had my brothers. My short stature. Otherwise very little. I remember seeing friends from home in the faces and expressions of these girls. My friend, Carole, whom I would ride with in St Bees, and others. This would continue; it continues today.

Often in the field, I sense things I would never sense at home. The closeness to nature, sleeping in the open, sleeping on the roof. Perhaps it is this? I recall on the night of 14th–15th April 1986, sleeping on the roof in al-Hadiyyah, in Raymah, a place between the sheer, ragged mountains and the coastal plain of the Tihamah. I dreamt that planes came over the mountains and started dropping bombs. I woke the next morning to the news that US planes had bombed Libya from RAF Lakenheath in a raid code-named Operation El Dorado Canyon.[3] More recently, as I landed in Salalah, a message would pop up on my phone from my friend, Ali, or from Awxiyar: *bār wəṣləš*? 'Have you arrived?'

[3] 1986 United States bombing of Libya - Wikipedia. Later that month, two British and one US citizen were kidnapped and killed in Beirut in retaliation. BBC ON THIS DAY | 17 | 1986: British journalist McCarthy kidnapped.

He knew, she knew, that I had arrived. Coincidence, too: on my first trip to Salalah in December 2009, I was hoping to meet Ali Musallam, the man with whom Tom Johnstone had worked. My friend Ali told me to show him the number; he said, he lives two doors up from here by the mosque.

Al-Junayd, several hours on unmade roads from Ibb, lay at a far lower altitude than Raymah. I think I was the first western woman to reach the village. Trust is essential in fieldwork. I trusted Halimah, who handed me off to the shared-taxi driver, who handed me off to an old man, who took me to his house in the middle of the night. His daughters hennaed my feet and gave me their rope bed. The man then handed off me to another driver to deliver me the next day to al-Junayd. I stayed in the headman's house with his wife and extended family. In the mornings, I walked with the women to collect sorghum and grass for the cows. On certain days, a group of women would take our washing down to the spring and lay it out to dry on the rocks. Water was plentiful here, in contrast to al-Jabin, where we paid for water to be fetched in buckets and only rarely washed clothes. I wore tailored nylon dresses over cotton *sirwāl*. Even today it is common for sisters or young friends to wear the same dresses, and I remember Halimah ordering two blue dresses for us. She was slight and beautiful, making me feel like the ugly twin, but she was happy we wore identical clothes.

I had two near-death experiences: one in the Raymah mountains near Kusmah in 1986, as I was walking by night during Ramadan with a male companion. He suddenly told me to duck, and as I did so a bullet hit the rock face above us. The

second was more extraordinary, perhaps more Yemeni, given the huge number of deaths by road: I had decided a few days before this incident never to ride in a shared taxi again. (I had just returned from Ibb to Sanʿa in a car that did the journey in half the time it should have taken. I was terrified.) But this time, with a colleague I had to do the journey to Abs in the Tihamah by shared taxi. No one in the taxi trusted the driver. He was young and impetuous. As we drove up a hill behind a laden lorry, he decided—why?—to overtake on the right, veering off the road, mounting the ridge. Passengers screamed. And as we finished overtaking, a second lorry crashed head on into the one we had overtaken, turning it onto the path we would have been on had the driver not taken that decision. He had no idea, but his thoughtless impetuosity saved our lives.

The humour of Yemenis is remarkable, even in times of adversity, and it is this, I think, that will stay with me. Once returning in a bus along the notorious Sumārah pass, we passed a water carrier that had overturned. The bus driver yelled out, *man yišti mā*' 'who wants water?' Another time a woman friend described, quite matter-of-factly, an acquaintance being blasted onto the roof by a gas canister.

I returned to London fifteen months later with my notebooks and my ragged cassette and tape recordings. Culture shock is often described in fieldwork books. What is not described is the reverse culture shock you experience upon return from the field. On the way home, I stopped in the Netherlands and spent a couple of days with Gauthier Juynboll. That helped. But back in London I wanted space to talk about my experiences—not what I had

done and seen, but how I had felt—I felt changed, but I looked the same: the noise of London; the damp pollution and the unremitting artificial light at night; missing the overwhelming kindness of Yemenis. I didn't know how to begin describing what I now felt. I called Diana/Khadijah. Abdullah al-Jarrash had called to see her, and I went round. A small bit of Yemen still here.

My work on Sanʿani Arabic began in 1990 with a British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellowship. This time I was to work on a functional approach to syntax (Watson 1993). The theoretical model and presentation relied partly on Cowell (1964) and Quirk and Greenbaum (1973). Again, choice of geographical region was not entirely objective. Now married with a young son, I wanted to go somewhere more accessible than the western mountains, somewhere where I could start work within a day, somewhere we could perhaps go together as a family at a later stage, somewhere from which I could return quickly if necessary. It was easier to approach Sanʿani consultants. Tim Mackintosh-Smith helped greatly with connections, including Abd al-Salam al-Amri, who collaborated on *Waṣf Ṣanʿā'* (Watson and al-Amri 1999), and Abd al-Wahhab al-Sayrafi and his family. At one stage, there were forty extended families in the Old City whom I visited regularly. I spent several hours a day listening and talking to determine the interaction of syntactic categories. I continued to use hardbacked notebooks, but during the early period of working on Sanʿani also relied heavily on file cards. The cassette recorders lacked robustness, such that each trip required a new recorder. I still have all the cassettes, a number of which were kindly digitalised by Ulrich

Seeger during my visiting professorship in Heidelberg 2003–2004; a large number still require digitalisation.

For work on *Waṣf Ṣanʿāʾ* in 1997, with funding from the British Academy, I brought over a language consultant to the UK for the first time. From this time, I began to compensate consultants for their time by the hour, ensuring language consultant fees were included in grant applications. Abd al-Salam al-Amri and I would sit in my office and go over texts he or others had already recorded. Where additional texts were needed, we would discuss the content before he recorded, and we would then transcribe and translate together.

Between 2000 and 2001, we stayed as a family in the heart of the old city, between *sūg al-xašab* and *sūg al-ʿirg*, the donkey *sūg*. Our children, Alistair, aged 10, and Sarah, aged 6, went to a Yemeni school on Zubayri Street. They knew no Arabic when we arrived, but after a year passed their end-of-year exams with good results. Early one morning shortly before we left, I walked through the *sūg* with Alistair. A dreadful, deep feeling swelled up inside me at the time telling me this moment would never happen again. We would never again walk through the *sūg* in the cold, sharp morning. This was a moment suspended in time.

Roll forward the years. I began to work on Mehri in 2006. This decision was due to chance, tragic chance, not choice. My good friend, Alexander Sima, with whom I had worked while holding a visiting professorship in Heidelberg, had been killed in a freak car accident between Hawf and al-Ghaydhah on 3rd September 2004. He had gone to al-Ghaydhah after a conference in Sanʿa to collect final data for his *Habilitation*. For years I would

dream that he recovered. Occasionally I still do. Werner Arnold and I arranged to complete his book of texts from Jōdəb and Rēhən (Sima 2009). I worked through the typescript in Heidelberg in summer 2006 and went to al-Ghaydhah in early 2008 to read through and edit all the texts with Askari Hujayran, Alexander's main consultant. I stayed with Askari's family for six weeks, working with a single consultant, Askari, for three hours a day each afternoon. By now, I had stopped using cassette recorders and recorded extra material directly onto the laptop with an external microphone. Thanks to advice from Ulrich Seeger, my labelling of audio files now took the form YEARMONTHDAY_SPEAKER_TOPIC.

In 2009, Saeed al-Mahri contacted me from Salalah, thanking me for the work Werner Arnold and I had done on Alexander's texts and offering to find me consultants in Salalah for my work on Mehri syntax. Chance again, and choice to travel. I travelled to Salalah for the first time in December 2009 and, with considerable help from Saeed, his brother, Ali, his mother, and Ali Musallam, began work on the Mehri of Dhofar. The next year I met up with my second Dhofari family, Bayt al-Muforag, in the desert village of Rabkut. These are my families in Dhofar.

In the early days of studying Mehri, data collection in cases of working with women involved direct transcription into hardback notebooks, and then reading back what I had written; where I worked with men, data was collected on a digital audio recorder, an Olympus LS-10, and material transcribed the next day together with the speaker. Transcription and translation were produced in Word documents. Since 2010, I have been able to

gain the trust of several older women. I record them, transcribe, and then check the transcriptions with them and/or with literate members of their families.

My fieldwork on Mehri and, from 2013, on Shehret has benefitted enormously from a greater general awareness of language documentation methods and from technological advances. I shudder to realise that it was only in early 2013 that I created metadata in a form that would make sense to others. Between January 2013 and December 2016, with co-investigators Miranda Morris and Domenyk Eades and with Saeed al-Mahri as the local research assistant, I led a community-based documentation study of the continental MSAL: Bathari, Harsusi, Hobyot, Mehri, and Shehret—the Leverhulme Trust-funded 'Documentation and Ethnolinguistic Analysis of Modern South Arabian' (DEAMSA). The main aim of this project was to collect, archive, and annotate monologue and dialogue texts relating to traditional ways of life. Working within a team for the first time, it was essential to label files systematically and produce consistent, coherent metadata using a system all agreed on. Files were labelled in the form YEARMONTHDAY_LANGUAGEDIALECT_SPEAKERCODE_TOPIC, ensuring that much information about the file was retrievable from the file label. Metadata in Excel for audio and video files included date, speaker code, topic, file description, key words, place of recording, quality of recording, recording equipment, recording issues; metadata for speakers included date of birth (approximate in the case of older speakers), code name, place of birth, current location, education level, travel, languages spoken,

tribal affiliation. No more flimsy cassette recorders or cumbersome reel-to-reel recorders, the equipment used by the team were Olympus LS-11 audio recorders, Marantz Professional solid-state PMD660 recorders with external Audio-technica microphones, and Everio JVC camcorders. Several Olympus LS-11 recorders were left with key data collectors when the western researchers left the field. Local data collectors would record topics the main investigators had requested, label files according to the agreed system, and upload to Dropbox folders which were used as a conduit for material. The resulting metadata was produced by the main team members or by Saeed al-Mahri. The Olympus LS-11 has continued to work well for both the main investigators and local data collectors since January 2013.

Video recordings, produced for Mehri, Shehret, and Harsusi, have made me and my colleagues aware of both the importance of communicative gesture in speech, and the degree to which gesture is language specific. The use of camcorders and video recorders has also opened up interesting new potential for error—light problems, shaking, general movement, failing to capture the whole body—quite apart from the fact that the more equipment one has, the greater the chance of forgetting that one vital lead. The audio and audio-visual material collected during the DEAMSA project has been archived in the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) in five separate archives: Bathari, Harsusi, Hobyot, Mehri, and Shehret. Transcriptions relating to archive material are produced using ELAN,[4] a freely available

[4] ELAN | The Language Archive (mpi.nl).

programme whereby transcriptions, translations, and annotations can be aligned directly with the audio or audio-visual media.

A secondary aim of the DEAMSA project and its precursor was to examine the phonetics and phonology of Mehri and Shehret, a project continuing through my later Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship (2019–2023). For this, data has been collected acoustically, through a Laryngograph microprocessor (Lx) (also known as an electroglottograph [EGG]), which measures the degree of vocal fold contact. Since 2011, when I brought individual speakers with their individually made palates over to the University of Leeds, data also includes Electropalatography (EPG), which shows patterns of tongue–palate contact. Analysis of the instrumental phonetic material resulting from Lx and EPG recordings is conducted by Barry Heselwood. Acoustic data are segmented and annotated through Praat (Boersma and Weenink 2017), with assistance from Andrea Boom and Carlos Jair Martínez Albarracín. Quantitative analysis is conducted by Gisela Tomé Lourido using Praat scripts and R. For the current project, fieldwork preparation involves collaboratively drawing up word lists on the basis of identified data gaps.

The digital revolution has had a major effect on fieldwork methods. If I ever needed extra data while working on Sanʿani, I would write to Tim Mackintosh-Smith, asking him to check a word or a paradigm with language consultants. I would then wait for the answer, Yemeni and British post permitting. Any extra data I would have needed from al-Jabin, Kusmah, or al-Junayd I could gather only by returning to the field. Today I can send a

WhatsApp message to friends and consultants and receive an answer within the day. I can check answers from consultants with other consultants. Digital recorders left in safekeeping with consultants mean I can request data that is sent and downloaded from Dropbox. The digital revolution also allows the fieldworker to check in with colleagues at home: sharing files on OneDrive, acoustic and Lx recording quality was checked by Barry and Gisela during the 2021 fieldwork trip before I continued to record, word lists were adjusted to account for new findings, and a joint decision was made to include audio-visual data in order to examine silently articulated final sonorants.

But the digital revolution comes at considerable cost: in my early years of travelling with no affordable means of contacting home, total immersion was possible. Total immersion enabled me not only to learn the language variety in question, but also helped keep my ADHD at bay. It would take a brave fieldworker to leave behind their smartphone today. The smartphone has resulted in decreasing attention spans of both fieldworker and consultants: while in my early days of studying Yemeni Arabic and Mehri, people would sit around the fire in the evening and chat, today many sit, hugging their smartphones. A bit of a story and then YouTube or someone calls.

Other changes in fieldwork include the need to obtain risk assessment clearance and ethical approval from the University. One time, shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic, ethical approval took over two months to obtain. Patience is still one virtue I strive for. Today I can get a visa for Oman online with visa approval within 24 hours. For Yemen, I would either travel to the Embassy

or send my passport, hoping it would return on time. Physical exercise has also changed. When I look back, I realise that the amount of exercise I have done during fieldwork decreased exponentially: in the 1980s, I would walk or climb every day, often long distances; in San'a, I would walk across the old city, climbing stairs of the tower houses to visit families, shopping, or visiting with friends; in al-Ghaydhah, I sat in Askari's house, and any physical exercise involved playing with the children to practise Mehri imperatives; in Rabkut, I would walk out with Bxayta to tend the goats, before the rains failed, occasionally taking goats out to graze in the afternoon; in Salalah, any walking is planned exercise and I frequently count turning the steering wheel of my hired car or tidying up after friends' children as exercise. This drop in exercise, in movement, is partly due to change in fieldwork location from the western mountains of Northern Yemen to cities and towns; partly due to urbanisation and socio-economic change, such that the people I work with no longer practise livestock husbandry or engage directly with the natural world.

My fieldwork practice has also changed through learning and gaining from colleagues: Miranda Morris told me in the early days of the DEAMSA project that she always checked new terms and phrases with at least three speakers of the language variety. Only if three people agreed independently would she record the term or phrase. My connections in Dhofar, initially kindly shared with me by Miranda Morris, mean it is far easier to connect with new consultants than it ever was in Yemen.

When I ask my good women friends in Dhofar, "Was life better in the past?" they say, "No. We had nothing." Asked the

same question, my grandmother would have replied, "Yes. It was." 'Nothing' means that nothing was given: water, fuel, and fodder had to be fetched; food was gathered, raised, or hunted; livestock was herded by girls and women in the case of goats, by men in the case of camels; water was sourced. Modernisation means that life is easier; but so much has also been lost: a life lived predominantly out of doors is now lived mainly within four walls and under a roof; knowledge of plants and fauna is rarely found among the younger generations; nature is something you visit for a picnic; the symbiotic relationship between nature and human life has been lost; the mobile phone has resulted in ever decreasing attention spans. Far more prosaically, for the fieldworker, although the equipment is more affordable, portable, and better, recording conditions are not. Today the fieldworker has to contend with noise from all angles: the plane flying overhead, the battery of mobile phones, air conditioning in the next room, television, the fridge, traffic, horns, children's cries bouncing off bare walls in sparsely furnished homes. On one fieldwork trip, I collected the first recordings in my hotel room, reasonably well-furnished, but disturbed on occasion by the hum of the fridge next door, the neighbour's television, or the sea, if the wind was strong. In my upstairs flat, the clacking water pumps and ventilation systems on the roof and the lift spilt extraneous sound into the recording. Said Baquir kindly offered me his office, and we scurried around turning off the air conditioning throughout the building. On several occasions I recorded in the car, throwing a shawl or blanket over the speaker's head and hoping against hope

that that blasted motorbike would not speed by during the recording.

My consultants are my friends and, as friends, we look for similar experiences that bind us. We worked out that Bxayta, nicknamed 'the Mehri Dictionary', was born in the same month as I—in May 1959 during what is known locally as 'the Year of the Drowning', in reference to the capsizing of two boats off the Dhofar coast and resultant loss of life. I would share stories of my grandmother, thinking the social differences between the UK and southern Arabia would have been far fewer in her days. And I feel the tugging need to maintain connections: Halimah, the ex-wife of Diana/Khadija's friend whom I first stayed with in Ibb in 1986, is about the same age as me. I would always go to see her when I visited Yemen, travelling down to Ibb from Sanʿa the day after landing before the fear of tackling the Sumārah pass became too great. In 2008, Halimah moved house and I lost contact with her. In January 2020, I was invited to meet Ali Salim al-Huraizi, the leader of the Mahrah resistance in Yemen. With him was a journalist from Ibb who wanted to interview me. During the interview, I appealed to Yemenis for information about Halimah. By Yemeni custom, I should not have used her name, but I needed to, if I were to receive any news. A month after my return, an email popped up in my inbox, "I am Bashir, the son of Halimah. She sends her regards." We spoke by video that afternoon and remain in touch.

Fieldwork is difficult, often frustrating and full of potential for error. We often feel alone, but as this essay shows, the fieldworker is never alone. I have learnt through the kindness of

strangers that anyone can be your teacher. I continue to travel back in time, though not as I did in the western mountains of Northern Yemen. My time travel now is through my memories and through the stories of my older women friends. How fantastically wonderful it would be to take them by the hand and return to their youth, if just for one day.

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# ‘THE COBBLER MADE MONEY FROM THE TOWN OF ‘IFAČ’: A SATIRICAL POEM IN IRAQI ARABIC ON CORRUPTION IN THE IRAQI PARLIAMENT

*Clive Holes*

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Invective poetry and lampoon (هجاء *hiǧāʾ*) has a long history in Arabic literature, going back at least as far as the seventh century *naqāʾiḍ* ‘flytings’ of the Umayyad poets Jarīr and Farazdaq. In the modern Arab World, we note the ubiquity of colloquial poetry as a vehicle for social and political satire. In Egypt, the works of such popular poets as Maḥmūd Bayram al-Tūnisī (1893–1961), Ṣalāḥ Jāhīn (1930–1986), and Aḥmad Fuʾād Nigm (1929–2013), and in Iraq, those of ʿAbbūd al-Karkhī (1861–1946), ʿAzīz ʿAlī (1911–1995), and ʿAbbās Jījān (1951– ) span more than a century of tumultuous political events in which the two countries emerged from British colonial control to espouse various incarnations of self-determination (*taqrīr al-maṣīr*, as the 1960s MSA jargon termed it). They provided an often highly amusing running commentary on the events and personalities of their time, written in the language of the street, not of an educated elite, which earned them the opprobrium of colonial occupiers and

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home-grown politicians alike. In the case of four of the six named above, their reward was exile (al-Tūnisī, Jījān) or prison (ʿAzīz ʿAlī, Nigm). Another of them, al-Karkhī, who founded a newspaper (*al-Karkh*) to express his opposition to the British and support the cause of Iraqi nationalism, had it closed down by the British on multiple occasions, and the water supply to his farms south of Baghdad cut off for good measure. Earlier, under the Ottomans, he had been a wanted man, forced to live in the desert for his own safety. Political poetry has been the weapon of choice of many perfectly ordinary people, too, and the modern communications of today, especially the internet, have provided them with a means of reaching a much wider audience than was possible hitherto. Such 'poetry of the little people' is of course not produced, disseminated, and consumed in an artistic vacuum—it references popular traditions of poetic form and language which are more or less well-known to ordinary readers, as I hope to show briefly in this paper, which is affectionately dedicated to my long-time friend and colleague Geoffrey Khan.

In Iraq, the former Saddam favourite and one-time General Secretary of the Assembly of Iraqi Popular Poets, ʿAbbās Jījān, living since 1993 in self-imposed exile in the Netherlands, has been particularly vocal not just about Saddam's iniquities, but in his critique of the post-Saddam settlement in Iraq, notably in his lengthy 2010 poem, written in the form of a letter to the then newly elected President of the United States, Barack Obama,[512] and first aired on Saudi television. The present article focuses on

[512] See Holes (2011) for the Arabic text, an English translation, and a commentary.

a poem by a much less well-known Iraqi poet, which first appeared on several Iraqi internet web-sites in the aftermath of the American invasion of the country at roughly the same time as Jījān's broadside, and then 'went viral'. The poem is about corruption in the Iraqi parliament set up by the Americans. The language is authentically Iraqi and the poem makes use of several well-known Iraqi adages in such a way that on internet bulletin boards the poem was at first widely—but wrongly—assumed to have been written by the father-figure of Iraqi popular poetry, ʿAbbūd al-Karkhī, who died in 1946. Many internet posters (copying each other) commented that "it was written 70 years ago, but it is as if it was written today."

Despite some superficial similarities to al-Karkhī's work,[513] it could not have been written by him, as a few moments' careful perusal of the text would have shown. For example, there is an allusion to the payment of Iraqi parliamentarians in American currency (v. 2), something unknown in al-Karkhī's time; and although oil was first struck in Iraq in the late 1920s, the country wasn't 'swimming in oil' (v. 6) until many years after al-Karkhī's death; 'diabetes and high blood-pressure' (also v. 6), those modern scourges, were not public health issues in the dirt-poor Iraq of the 1920s and 1930s; and some of the Arabic idioms, e.g.,

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[513] The poem has the same rhyme scheme and metre as Al-Karkhī's most famous composition, *Al-Maǧraša* 'The Hand Quern', which seems to have been sufficient reason to convince many internet bloggers that it must be by him. Also, al-Karkhī does use the proverb which is the refrain of the poem and the title of this article at least once in his collected works, as noted by Al-Ḥajjiyya (2004, 302).

يجي كل يوم ابفلم *yiǧi kull yōm bi filim* ‘he comes every day with a (different) film’ (v. 9), i.e., with a different fabricated story, were not current in al-Karkhī’s day, and nor was he in the habit of using MSA phrases, like *al-fasād al-mālī* ‘financial corruption’ (v. 8) in his poetry. The poem was, in fact, composed by the living Iraqi school-teacher and popular poet Sāmi ʿAbdul-Munʿim,[514] and is an attack on the corruption of the present-day Iraqi parliament, not that of the Hashemite era of the 1920s/1930s (also set up by an invading foreign power, the British), with which its content does, however, have some similarities.[515]

The title of the poem is *Gayyam ar-Raggāʿ min Dīrat ʿIfač* (Al-Ḥanafī 1962, 1:296), an Iraqi proverb which literally means ‘The Cobbler Made Money from the Town of ʿIfač’. This saying is applied sarcastically to anybody who practises a trade in a place where there are no customers for it, and, more broadly, to anybody engaged in a task which is by definition fruitless (McCarthy and Raffouli 1965, 373). The point is that the inhabitants of ʿIfač, a town in southern Iraq, were Bedouin who always went barefoot—so how could a cobbler ever make any money there? The

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[514] A list of over eighty of the poet’s poems is at http://www.al-nnas.com/ARTICLE/SAbdMunam/index.htm. See also http://www.al-nnas.com/ARTICLE/SAbdMunam/18m3.htm, accessed on 6 September 2021, for a ‘clarification’ (*tawḍīḥ*) in which the poet points out that the poem discussed in this article is his and his alone and has been mistakenly attributed to al-Karkhī.

[515] Al-Karkhī’s poem *Al-Hirr wa l-Ǧrēḏiyya* ‘The Cat and the Rats’, written in the mid-1920s, attacks the duplicity of the British Mandate authorities in Iraq and the puppet parliamentary system they set up to do their bidding. See Holes (2019).

implication in the poem is that the members of this new parliament (henceforward, MPs) and what they offer are like the proverbial cobbler who went to a town where shoes are not worn—they are of no use whatsoever.

The Arabic poem is presented below with a facing (liberal) English translation.[516] The poem has nine quatrains (رباعيات *rubāʿiyyāt*)—the quatrain being a common structural element in non-Bedouin Iraqi and Gulf colloquial poetry—in which the final line of each quatrain has the same theme rhyme, in this case چ- *-ač*. Each quatrain is followed by a fifth line that repeats the refrain (which is also the title of the poem) and echoes the theme rhyme. The versified English translation imitates the rhyme scheme of the original, i.e., *aaax x*, *bbbx x*, *cccx x*, etc.

## 1.0. Text and Translation

'The Cobbler Made Money from the Town of 'Ifač'

(1) Did the cobbler make money from these manicured beards?! — قيم الرگاع من هاي اللحه[517]

They look so imposing, so grave, so revered; — اتشوفه هيبه[518] وعنده لحيه امسرحه

But people are brazenly, shamelessly smeared — يشتم ابلا خجل وبلا مستحه[519]

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[516] For a video with a recitation of the poem by the poet himself, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPFHCi0Kebs.

[517] لحه *liḥa* 'beards', i.e., 'greybeards, elder statesmen'.

[518] هيبه *hēba* means here 'awesomeness, gravitas'.

[519] مستحه *mistaḥa* 'a thing to be ashamed of'.

من ايحس المقعد اشويه اندحچ[520]
Whenever they feel someone's squeezing their seat;
قيم الركّاع من ديرة عفچ
Did the cobbler make money from Bedouin's feet?

(2) برلمان اهل المحابس[521] والمدس[522]
Parliament's full of soft shoes and gold bling:
عگب ماچانوا يدورون الفلس
In the past, money-grubbers, they'd do anything
هسه هم[523] يمخمخ[524] وهم يختلس
Now relaxed, on the fiddle, they live like a king!

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[520] اندحچ *indaḥač* and *inda'ač* 'to be crowded out, pushed out'. What is meant here is that the MPs don't hesitate to blacken the character of anyone trying to muscle in and take their seat.

[521] محابس *maḥābis* SG محبس *miḥbas* 'gold ring'.

[522] مدس *midis* SG مداس *mdās* 'soft shoe, slipper'.

[523] هم... وهم... *ham... wa ham* 'both... and...', throughout Iraq and the Gulf, a Persian borrowing.

[524] In the internet version, the word يرتشي *yartaši* 'takes bribes' appears here, but the author rejects this as a third-party invention which, in any case, does not scan. He says in his *tawḍīḥ* that the correct text is يمخمخ *yimaxmix*, which has the sense of being relaxed, taking things easy (Enam al-Wer, p.c.). But in the Youtube performance he says يفخفخ *yi-faxfix*, which has the meaning of showing off, acting ostentatiously. Either word would fit the metre and suit the context.

ولو نقص من راتبه سنت[525] انعقچ[526]
If their salary's short by one cent, though, they bleat;
قيم الرگاع من ديرة عفچ
Did the cobbler make money from Bedouin's feet?

(3) اتشوف واحدهم امعگل[527] بالوقار
One wears a headdress, so staid and sedate;
وبالاصل تاريخه اسود كله عار
But his history's shady, this old reprobate;
ابضرف ثلث اسنين مليونير صار
In the space of three years he's made millions… but wait—
ايريد عالوادم[528] ايعبرله چلچ[529]
His trick's to pull fast ones on all whom he meets…
قيم الرگاع من ديرة عفچ
Did the cobbler make money from Bedouin's feet?

(4) گمت ما اعرف حماها امن الرجل[530]
I can't tell if this fever's endemic or what…

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[525] سنت *sant* '(American) cent'. The US sent 12 billion dollars into Iraq after the invasion. It was never properly accounted for. See 'How the US sent $12bn in money to Iraq. And watched it vanish' (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/feb/08/usa.iraq1).

[526] انعقچ *inʿaqač* 'to feel hurt, upset'.

[527] امعگل *mʿaggal* 'wearing a traditional head-dress with a rope (عگال *ʿigāl*)'.

[528] عالوادم *ʿa l-awādim* < على الوادم *ʿala l-awādim* 'on people'.

[529] ايعبرله چلچ *yiʿabbir lih čalač* 'he pulls a fast one on him, cheats him'; كلك *kalak*/چلچ *čalač* in Iraqi is a 'trick, deceit'.

[530] A reference to the Iraqi saying الحمى تجي من الرجلين *il-ḥimma tiği min ir-riğlēn* 'the fever starts from the feet', i.e., problems originate from

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ‘Grab what you can’—that’s fair-play, is it not? | ياهو التكضه اهو ايمثل العدل[531] |
| | Of turnips and radish we import a lot; | وگمنه نستورد الشلغم والفجل[532] |
| | And everyone’s looking for fat on their meat; | لان كلها ضلت اتدور ودچ[533] |
| | Did the cobbler make money from Bedouin’s feet? | قيم الرگاع من ديرة عفچ |
| (5) | We’ve lost track of the truth in the fog of their lies; | والله ضيعنه الصدگ من الچذب |
| | They seem so all-powerful, their words mesmerise. | اتشوفه هيبه وحچيه المصفط عذب[534] |

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oneself or from one’s nearest and dearest, not from outsiders. The belief that fevers enter the body via the feet (and makes them feel cold) was once common in Iraq. See al-Shalji (1982, 1:600); Al-Ḥanafi (1962, 1:157). ʿAzīz ʿAlī, in one of his sung ‘monologues’ *(Yā Duktūr!*), first broadcast on Baghdad radio in 1939, makes use of the same proverb in a similar context when retailing the sad state of Iraq under the British-backed Hashemite monarchy: دا تجينه الحمه من رجلينه! *da tiǧīna min riǧlēna* ‘this fever comes from our feet’. See Holes (2014, 229).

[531] ياهو التكضه اهو ايمثل العدل *yāhu il tiguḍḍah əhwa yimaṯṯil il-ʿadil* lit. ‘whatever you can grab, that represents fairness’.

[532] Implying that Iraq’s need to import such basic foodstuffs, which it once produced in abundance, shows the level to which it has sunk.

[533] ودچ *widač* is the fat on cheap cuts of meat which can be extracted for further culinary use by boiling, something only a poor person would normally be driven to do.

[534] حچيه المصفط عذب *ḥačīh al-muṣaffaṭ ʿaḏib* lit. ‘his carefully crafted words are sweet’.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | From the east to the west they'll take you for a ride, | یاخذك وایردك ابشرق وغرب |
| | Then stick their knives in you, stab hard and repeat. | وبسچاچینه یدچك حیل دچ[535] |
| | Did the cobbler make money from Bedouin's feet? | قیم الرگاع من د یرة عفچ |
| (6) | Their meaningless talk's put my head in a spin, | حیل دوخني الحچي الماله ربط[536] |
| | Diabetes, blood-pressure, and spots on my skin! | وصار عندي سکر وحصبه وضغط |
| | How come, when a river of oil we swim in, | اشلون احنا النسبح[537] ابشط النفط |
| | We've spines for our mattress and thorns for our sheet? | نفترش عاگول[538] ونتغطه ابحسچ |
| | Did the cobbler make money from Bedouin's feet? | قیم الرگاع من دیرة عفچ |
| (7) | I can't tell the wolf from the lamb anymore, | گمت ما امیز الذیب امن الحمل |
| | Wherever I turn, my heart burns to its core— | امنین ما التفت گلبي یشتعل |

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[535] بسچاچینه یدچك حیل دچ *bi sačāčīnah yidiččak ḥēl dačč* lit. 'he will stab you violently with his knives'; حیل *ḥēl* is an adverb meaning 'strongly, with force'.

[536] الحچي الماله ربط *il-ḥači il mā lih rabaṭ* < الحچي الي ما له ربط *il-ḥači illi mā lih rabaṭ* 'talk which has no coherence'.

[537] احنا النسبح *iḥna il nisbaḥ* < احنا الي نسبح *iḥna illi nisbaḥ* 'we who swim'.

[538] نفترش عاگول *niftiriš ʿāgūl* 'we lie on camel's thorn' (a prickly shrub found in the desert).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | It's never seen folk follow madmen before; | انه ما شايف شعب يتبع خبل[539] |
| | My hair has gone grey and I'm lost on the street, | شاب راسي وتيهت كل السچچ[540] |
| | Did the cobbler make money from Bedouin's feet? | قيم الرگاع من ديرة عفچ |
| (8) | O government members, sagacious and shrewd, | يا حكومتنه الرشيده ام الوقار |
| | Financial corruption's your real aptitude; | الفساد المالي عنوان الچ صار |
| | We knew when their tanks brought you here we were screwed! | ندري جابوكم ابدبابه وقطار[541] |
| | But why, like big fish, must you little fish eat? | ليش ضليتوا سمچ ياكل سمچ |
| | Did the cobbler make money from Bedouin's feet? | قيم الرگاع من ديرة عفچ |
| (9) | We need to distinguish the good men and true, | لازم انميز الزين امن الزلم |
| | Elect just the honest and erudite few; | وننتخب كلمن شهم صاحب علم |

[539] خبل ***xibal*** = 'lunatic behaviour'; مخبل ***mxabbal*** means 'madman'.

[540] تيهت كل السچچ ***tayyaht kull is-sičač*** 'I've lost all my bearings'; سچچ ***sičač***, SG سك ***sikka*** is 'road, street, alleyway'.

[541] The line says literally 'tanks and trains'. He means the present-day parliamentarians, who were installed as a result of elections set up by the Americans.

| | |
|---|---|
| ونرفض اللي يجي كل يوم ابفلم[542] | And cock-and-bull stories from chancers eschew, |
| من ايشوف المنصب اشويه اندرچ | When they face the loss of their well-padded seat; |
| قيم الرگاع من ديرة عفج | Did the cobbler make money from Bedouin's feet? |

## 2.0. Commentary

### Verse 1

As is often the case in poems composed of quatrains, the opening line of the first stanza references the refrain which occurs at the end of each. Here it is reworded to focus on the poem's target: هاي اللحه *hāy l-liḥa* 'these beards', further specified in the second line as *liḥa msarraḥa* 'manicured' or 'well-tended' beards. The poet is referring to the MPs in the new Iraqi parliament. There is the possibility in the use of لحه *liḥa* that he is specifically referring to the Shiʿi religious leaders who were elected in the framework of American notions of what proportional representation should look like in Iraq. The phrase اتشوفه هيبه *tšūfah hēba*, repeated in v. 5, means literally 'you see him (= the average MP) as a figure of awe, deserving fear and respect', but this impression is undermined in the next line by his claimed tendency to insult any critic out of fear that the criticism is aimed at removing him from his comfortable parliamentary seat and all the perks that go with it.

[542] Lit. 'he brings a (different) film every day', said of someone who changes his version of events to suit the agenda of whoever is listening.

## Verse 2

The connotations of the words used to describe the new parliamentarians (اهل المحابس والمدس *ahl al-maḥābis wa l-midis*) indicate that they are 'new money' who have been feathering their own nests, عگب ماچانوا يدورون الفلس *ʿogub mā čānū yidawrūn il-filis* 'after they had once chased every penny', i.e., scrounged a living by fair means or foul, by hook or by crook. But now هم يمخمخ وهم يختلس *ham yimaxmix u ham yixtilis* 'they feel totally chilled out and embezzle (government) money'—the implication is 'large amounts of it'. But old habits apparently die hard: if their government salary is even 'one cent' short, they feel hurt and upset (*inʿaqač*).

## Verse 3

This takes the negative picture of MPs a stage further by focusing on one who wears traditional dress in an effort to look 'venerable' (امعگل بالوقار *mʿaggal bi l-waqār*), but who in fact has a shady history filled with shameful behaviour (كله عار *kullah ʿār*). He made his millions in double-quick time by 'pulling fast ones' (ايعبرله چلچ *yiʿabbir lih čalač*).

## Verse 4

The poem now takes a more introspective turn and asks the question, 'how can we have allowed this to happen?' A well-known Iraqi proverb is used: 'Did this fever we suffer from start in our feet?', i.e., is it home-grown and our own fault? Whatever the answer to that, the modern philosophy of 'Grab what you can when you can' is thought by most to be justifiable. One result is

that Iraq has been reduced to importing شلغم وفجل *šalġam u fiğil* 'turnips and radishes'—cheap basic vegetables which were once produced in abundance in the Iraqi سواد *sawād* 'alluvium', the highly fertile lands of central Iraq between the Tigris and Euphrates. Just as bad is the fact that ordinary Iraqis these days must search hard to find the cheapest, fatty cuts of meat, as they cannot afford anything more expensive.

## Verses 5–7

In these verses, the poet returns to the rhetorical tricks of the parliamentarians—they come out with honeyed words that sound plausible (حچيه المصفط *ḥačīh al-muṣaffaṭ*), but which are calculated to deceive, and behind their lies and distortions lurks a ruthless brutality. Their arguments are an incoherent babble (حچي الماله ربط *ḥači il mā lih rabaṭ*), and their incompetence is enough to make people ill and turn their hair prematurely grey. Who is acting in Iraq's best interests, the poet asks, and who is the enemy within? It is no longer possible to tell, as truth and lies can no longer be distinguished. The fact of the matter is that Iraq, once a rich country ('swimming in oil'), is being mismanaged for the benefit of a few profiteers.

## Verses 8–9

The poet ends with a direct and sarcastic plea to the 'big fish' of the 'rightly guided' (رشيده *rašīda*) and 'dignified' (ام الوقار *umm al-waqār*) Iraqi government, put there by an unnamed 'them' (= the USA) with its 'tanks and trains', to take pity on the 'little fish' of

Iraq. He makes a further appeal, this time to his fellow countrymen, to elect only 'decent and expert' (شهم صاحب علم *šahim ṣāḥib ʿilim*) Iraqis and eject the opportunistic liars who currently occupy parliament. A forlorn hope, he obviously feels: he ends as he began, with the words which are proverbial in Iraq for an enterprise which has no prospect whatsoever of success: قيم الرگاع من ديرة عفچ *gayyam ar-raggāʿ min dīrāt ʿifač* 'Did the cobbler make money from the town on 'Ifač?', or as we say in English, 'And pigs will fly'.

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# ATTRIBUTIVE POSSESSION IN SOQOTRI: THE EVIDENCE OF THE 'VIENNA CORPUS'*

*Leonid Kogan and Maria Bulakh*

Soqotri, a Modern South Arabian language spoken on the island of Soqotra (Gulf of Aden, Yemen; for a general overview, see Kogan and Bulakh 2019), displays a complex system of possession markers. While nominal possession (where both possessum and possessor are nouns) is consistently expressed with the genitive marker (*nota genitivi*) *di-* attached to the possessor (henceforth '*di*-marking'), pronominal possession (where the posessum is a personal pronoun) can be marked by three different devices:

(1) an independent personal pronoun combined, sometimes with slight phonetic changes at juncture (Naumkin et al. 2014, 523), with *di-* (also referred to here as '*di*-marking');
(2) a pronominal suffix combined with the ablative preposition *men* (labelled '*men*-marking') (Naumkin et al. 2018, 610);

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(3) a pronominal suffix directly attached to the base of the possessum (with a restricted number of nouns only).

While *di*-marking is semantically unrestricted, *men*-marking covers various instances of the part–whole relation, most typically involving body part terms as possessums.[1] Even here, however, *di*-marking can be used, with non-rigid complementary distribution: if the possessive pronoun is not coreferent with any other constituent in the clause, *men*-marking is usually preferred; otherwise, a *di*-marked possessive pronoun is employed, which can often be omitted. With 3rd-person pronouns, this opposition functions as a device of referential aid (Kibrik 2011, 62–63): a *men*-marked possessive pronoun indicates that its referent is ill-accessible, and, in the case of referential conflict, it suggests the choice of the otherwise less likely candidate.

In recent years, the present authors have been intensely dealing with possession in Soqotri. As a result, a comprehensive description based on their fieldwork findings has been prepared (henceforth Bulakh and Kogan 2025).[2] The present article elabo-

[1] On the part-whole relation as a special type of possession, which is distinct from both ownership relation (possession proper) and kinship relation, see Aikhenvald (2013, 3–4). Crosslinguistically, part-whole relation and kinship relation often receive the same marking and are distinct from ownership relation. The opposition is usually described in terms of 'alienable' versus 'inalienable' possession (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001, 961; see Heine 1997, 10 for a brief survey of alternative terms).

[2] To appear soon in a collection of MSA studies edited by Sabrina Benjaballah and Julien Dufour.

rates previously achieved results, now using textual evidence collected and published by the great Austrian Orientalist and Semitist David Heinrich Müller, the virtual pioneer of research into the Modern South Arabian group. As elsewhere in our publications on Soqotri, we conventionally label the whole of Müller's texts 'the Vienna corpus', since all the pertinent sources (Müller 1902; 1905; 1907; and Bittner 1918) were published in the Austrian capital (many were also recorded and analysed there).

Generally speaking, the grammar and lexicon of the Vienna corpus, considerably larger than that so far collected and published by the Russian-Yemeni fieldwork team (CSOL I–II), is very close to those of the Soqotri variety spoken by our language consultants from the Daʿrho tribe. Therefore, it is very helpful to clarify the linguistic facts observed and analysed in the course of our fieldwork—including possession marking. Unsurprisingly, some divergencies are also in evidence. Some of them may be attributed to the chronological gap of ca 120 years between the two corpora, but the possibility of dialectal differences should not be excluded.

The present study is based on an exhaustive perusal of the Vienna corpus, which has yielded an impressive number of more than 720 tokens of possessive constructions of various types. The aim of the subsequent sections is twofold. On the one hand, they present evidence on *di-* and *men*-marking in the Vienna corpus, thus considerably broadening the picture obtained from CSOL I–

II.[3] On the other hand, it reveals a few positions where usage in the Vienna corpus differs from what has been recorded by the Russian-Yemeni team. Müller's transcription of Soqotri has been preserved, in slightly modified form, together with his German translations.

## 1.0. *Men*-marking in Product–Source Relations between Nouns

In the sources analysed in Bulakh and Kogan (2025), the ablative preposition *men* can link two nouns in a product–source relation. The same employment is found in the Vienna corpus.

(1) *wu-ksó'o sis rey we-ílbib min eṣféroh*
'...und fanden bei ihr den Kopf und das Herz des Vogels' (SAE VII 53.23–25)

In this example, the possessive meaning 'the heart of the bird' (*das Herz des Vogels*) clearly derives from—and is *de facto* identical to—the ablative 'the heart (taken) from the bird'.[4]

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[3] The use of pronominal possessive suffixes in the Vienna corups (to some extent broader than in today's language) is treated in Bulakh and Kogan (2025, §3.6) and will not be discussed here.

[4] There is one seeming example of *men* functioning as a true genitive marker introducing the non-agentive argument of a deverbal noun ('the story of X' = 'the story about X'): *istó'oh temtíloh min férehim di mískīn* 'Beendet ist die Geschichte von der Tochter des Armen' (SAE VII 69.28–29). Its relevance is, however, undermined by the fact that the story is bilingual (Jibbali-Soqotri) and the Jibbali version, which presumably served as a kind of *Vorlage* for the Soqotri one, also displays *min*.

## 2.0. The Semantic Scope of *men*-marking in Pronominal Possession

### 2.1. *Men*-marking for Kinship Relations

Unlike modern Soqotri, the Vienna corpus features a few examples of *men*-marking introducing kinship relation (and similar types of social relations). The by no means numerous examples of this category are listed below.

'mother' [bíyyo]

(2) *wu-firími déki di-ṭéy* ***máyhi bíoh*** *ṭḥadémo … wu-férihim di* ***mes bioh*** *ḥŝes ål tenáfaḥ ŝi*
'Und die beiden Töchter, **die eine Mutter hatten**, waren emsig… die Tochter aber, **die allein eine Mutter hatte**, arbeitete nicht' (SAE VI 354.19–22)[5]

'children' [embórye]

(3) *ʿážeh di-baʿáloh wu-bíroh embóriye wu-béʿel* ***mes embóriye*** *minṭá wa-minṭá*
'Eine Frau heiratete und gebar Kinder, und **ihre Kinder** heirateten dahin und dorthin' (SAE VI 299.18–19)

'children' [megɔ́še]

(4) *wu-elhé ʿegehéten ʾórbeḥ wu-****mésin megā́ši*** *irbáʿah*
'Und diese Frauen sind vier und **ihre Kinder** sind vier' (SAE VI 91.18–19)

[5] Literally, 'the girl whose mother was only one'.

‘husband’ [ʕag]

(5) *wa-**més ʿag** meš šem sáʿdin*
‘Und **ihr Mann** hieß Saʕdin’ (SAE VI 140.12)

(6) *ʿeméroh heš dihé fírehim šḥarómk toš tió tke ʿanébe saʿīd **ménhi ʿaig***
‘Da sprach zu ihm seine Tochter: Er sei mir verboten so wie du, und nur Said ist **mein Mann**’ (SAE VII 94.1–3)

‘friend, lover’ [máḥref]

(7) *ʿážeh di-tebóre féreḥ wu-**més máḥref** be-di-kidíri*
‘Eine Frau gebar einen Bastard,[6] und **ihr Geliebter** war aus Di-Kidiri’ (SAE VI 278.7–8)

The Arabic loanword *wakīl* ‘the male parent to whom a girl’s marriage agreement is delegated’ may belong here, too.

(8) *mon **mes wukīl***
‘Wer ist **ihr Bevollmächtigter**?’ (SAE VI 150.25)[7]

## 2.2. *Men*-marking for Part–Whole Relations

Exactly as in CSOL I–II, most examples for *men*-marking come from the domain of the part–whole relation. This involves not only prototypical instances, but also a few other peripheral types of possessive constructions. Some of these show preference for *men*-marking, while others employ it only sporadically. As will be shown, the preference for *men*-marking in various subtypes is

[6] In fact, likely a plural (‘bastards’), cf. the singular *forḥ* in SAE VI 236.9.

[7] In this example, *men* can be alternatively interpreted as an ablative preposition (‘a representative from her’), cf. *men*-marking with *wukále* ‘marriage rights’ (SAE VI 148.9), where the bride is understood as the ‘cause’ of the event (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, ex. (102) with fn. 37).

not identical in the two corpora. Thus, unlike CSOL I–II, the Vienna corpus consistently uses *men*-marking in the domain of place–inhabitant relations, as well as in relations between names of action/state and argument. Conversely, 'non-physical body parts' display vacillation between *men*-marking and *di*-marking in both CSOL I–II and the Vienna corpus.

### 2.2.1. Body Part Relations

As in CSOL I–II (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.2.1), the most conspicuous and frequent use of *men*-marking involves possessums referring to body parts. The following concepts from this category are attested with *men*-marking in the Vienna corpus (words not attested in CSOL I–II are marked with *).

> **'back'** [ṭádaʕ] (SAE VI 71.5+), **'beard'** *[láḥye] (SAE VI 89.7.11),[8] **'beard'** *[díḳehon] (SAE VII 26.10–11+), **'belly'** [mɛr] (SAE VI 33.5), **'body'** [gad] (SAE VI 211.5–6), **'breast'** [gɛ́hɛ] (SAE VI 33.4+), **'buttocks, anus'** [ʕánḳeher] (SAE IV 155.30–32+), **'buttocks, backside'** [gózer] (SAE VI 254.16–17+), **'ear'** [ídhɛn] (SAE VI 9.19+), **'eye'** [ʕayn] (SAE VI 17.30–31+), **'face'** [fɛ́ne] (SAE VI 9.1–2+), **'feet'** [ŝérhon] (SAE VI 248.17+), **'finger'** [éṣbeʕ] (SAE VI 107.12+), **'fist'** *[ẓátem] (SAE VI 193.3–4+), **'foot'** [ŝɔb] (SAE VI 33.7+), **'front leg'** *[ídbeh] (SAE VI 325.4–5), **'hand'** [ed] (SAE VI 10.14+), **'head'** [ri] (SAE VI 41.9+), **'heart'** [éľbeb] (SAE VI 21.7+), **'heel'** *[médrɛhɛm] (SAE VI 309.6–7), **'lap'** *[ẓ́ánaḥ] (SAE IV 79.24–26), **'lock of hair'** *[raʕt] (SAE VI 227.16–17), **'mouth'** [ḥe] (SAE VI 68.28+), **'nail'** [ṭífɛr] (SAE VI 63.16), **'neck'** [feḳréro] (SAE VI 325.4–5), **'neck'**

[8] An Arabism (LS 231, Simeone-Senelle and Lonnet 1991, 1454).

[ʕáreb] (SAE VI 315.17–18+), **'nose'** [náḥrer] (SAE VI 3.14+), **'penis'** [ʕázgeheľ] (SAE VI 91.5+), **'pubic hair'** *[ménsob] (SAE VI 312.3), **'rib'** [ʑ̂aḷʕ] (SAE VI 120.27), **'side** (of body)' *[fɛr] (SAE VI 276.19–20), **'small of the back'** *[móten] (SAE VI 169.3+), **'teat'** [tódi] (SAE VI 91.21+), **'testicle'** [kérʔḥeľ] (SAE IV 155.30–32+), **'thigh'** [erbébo] (SAE VI 33.5), **'tooth'** [ʕáḷe] (SAE VI 281.11), **'tail'** [dénob] (SAE VI 324.20–21)

### 2.2.2. Part–Whole Relations with Inanimate Possessors

As in CSOL I–II (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.2.2), *men*-marking is consistently used with possessums referring to parts of inanimate wholes, such as plants.

'sprouts': *meš ŝigéf* (SAE VI 29.16), *meš id ŝigéf* (SAE VI 101.8) (LS 425)

'root' [ŝeríḥo]: *meš ŝéraḥ* (SAE VI 29.17)

(9) *dórib šírehom ḥúfor **meš ŝéraḥ***
'Dorib ist ein Baum, **dessen Wurzeln** ausgegraben werden' (SAE VI 281.13)

'stem' [gódiʕ]: *meš gódeḥ* (SAE VI 29.18)

'pollen' [nɛ́bot]

(10) *laḥyéren lehó meš nébit*
'Schön wär' es wenn ich dich befruchten könnte' (SAE VI 238.16)[9]

Examples from other semantic groups attributable to this category are also in evidence.

[9] *lehó **meš nébit*** 'if I were **your pollen**'.

'rice' [írhɛz] (in a cooking pot)

(11) *dihó ṣferíyye libínih wu-més írehez dehéb*
'Der Kessel weiß * Golden die Speis' (SAE VI 360.6–7, a riddle for 'egg')[10]

'dirt' [diyáʕ] (in the circumcision wound)

(12) *ʿaf linḳá mes dur wa-més díaḥ*
'...bis es rein von Blut und Schmutz wird' (SAE VI 292.14–15)[11]

'sources (of water)' [ŝeb]

(13) *rího di-díbeni minmáleḥ ḥeb ke-**més ŝíʾob** il-rího min gírgeh*
'Das Wasser von Dibeni ist gesalzen, obgleich **des Wassers Urquellen** in Girgeh... sind' (SAE VI 272.4–5)

Finally, in the following examples the possessum is perceived as a subset (without clearly defined boundaries) of a non-discrete whole. This employment can alternatively be interpreted as partitive use of ablative *men* (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §4.2).

'abundance; majority' [dolḳ]

(14) *géleménoh nóyhir **meš dolḳ** be-ṭeyrébeh*
'Die Fledermäuse sind Vögel, **deren Menge** sich in Höhlen aufhält' (SAE VI 227.14–15)

(15) *éʾefo il-yeʿómer ʾídihaḥ wa-**dólḳ máyhin** ʿeghéten il teʿámerinš*
'Die Leute bearbeiten das Drachenblut und **meistens** sind es Frauen, die es bearbeiten' (SAE VI 232.232)[12]

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[10] ***més írehez** dehéb* '**its rice** is gold'.

[11] ***mes dur** wa-**més díaḥ*** '**its blood** and **its dirt**'.

[12] ***dólḳ máyhin** ʿeghéten* '**most of them** are women'.

‘half, part’ [fáḳḥ]

(16) *teʿóṣim **mes** le-**fáḳḥ***
‘Binde fest **dessen Hälfte**’ (SAE VI 313.14)

(17) *wu-tzáʿan disén eḳenióh **mes faḳḥ***
‘Sie nahmen von ihrer Speise **die Hälfte**’ (SAE VI 229.17–18)[13]

### 2.2.3. Spatial Relations

As in CSOL I–II (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.2.3), spatial relations are compatible with *men*-marking in the Vienna corpus.

‘surroundings’ [ḥáylihil]

(18) *iblég-ihin ḳehór iṭéher id ḳuʿharíten w-id ḥádoyb lil men le-ḥáylihil*
‘Du schickest sie, damit sie gehen in die Dörfer und in die Städte, die rings um uns herum sind’ (Bittner 1918, 136.36)[14]

(19) *wa-kón etíhi ízʿem **may** le-**ḥáylihil***
‘Und es saß da die Menge in **seinem Umkreise**’ (Bittner 1918, 72.32)

‘side’ [naṣf]

(20) *wa-ʾénher tho meš le-inṣáfoh*
‘Und er führte mich um sie rings herum’ (SAE VI 21.19)[15]

(21) *wa-ʿáže izʿémo may le-náṣf*
‘Und die Frau ihm zur Seite’ (SAE VII 70.7–8)[16]

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[13] *mes faḳḥ* ‘half of it’.

[14] *men le-ḥáylihil* ‘in our surroundings’.

[15] *meš le-inṣáfoh* ‘on its sides’.

[16] *may le-náṣf* ‘on his side’.

'side' [dɛ́fɛ]: *ménhi le-défeh* 'mir zur Seite' (SAE VI 92.3)[17]

'lower part' [gɛ́me]

(22) *iḥúfor ḳáber ráḥab wa-**méš** be-**gé'me** yeʿúmor láḥad k(y)ófid*
'Wird ein breites Grab begraben und am **untern Teil desselben** wird eine Schmale Höhlung gemacht' (SAE VI 265.15–16)

'middle' [ʕamḳ]

(23) *ṭhar ʾóben réḳfif di-ʿeyḳíloh maíhin be-ʿámḳ*
'Auf einen breiten Stein, der in der Mitte aufgestellt ist' (SAE VI 269–70)[18]

(24) *wa-yeʿúmor **meš** id-**ʿamḳ** ʾébehon ḳenhíten*
'Und in **deren Mitte** kleinere Steinen gelegt werden' (SAE VI 310.19–20)

### 2.2.4. Abstract Properties

As in CSOL I–II (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.2.4), *men*-marking is frequently used to introduce the holder of an abstract property. The prime example is *men*-marking of the bearer of a name. In the Vienna corpus—exactly as in modern Soqotri—*šɛ́m* 'name' consistently governs a *men*-marked possessive pronoun (ca. 80 examples). Unexpected *di*-marking (contradicting the distributional rules outlined above) for this noun is attested in four examples only, all adduced below.

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[17] *ménhi le-défeh* 'on its side'.

[18] *maíhin be-ʿámḳ* 'in their midst'.

(25) *tió ʿeyríboh dse le-šém*
'Wie man schon aus dem Namen erkannt' (SAE VI 232.13)[19]

(26) ***dihó šem*** *ḳor išeʿóli*
'...damit **mein Name** groß werde' (SAE VI 286.14)

(27) *iném* ***di-ḗ šém***
'Wie ist **dein Name**?' (SAE VI 16.25)

(28) *lóʾo tréʾihin* ***dihó*** *ʿan* ***šem***
'Warum fragst du nach **meinem Namen**?' (SAE VI 16.27–28)

Terms for 'appearance, shape', 'sort, kind', and 'colour' also introduce their pronominal possessors via *men*-marking (with sporadic exceptions).

'kind, sort; breed, pedigree; color' [kɔn]

(29) *ʿaig di-ŝotéʾe... íken* ***mes*** [sic!] ***kån*** *ḥáher*
'Ein Mann, der traurig ist... **dessen Gesichtsfarbe** ist schwarz' (SAE VI 274.8–10)

(30) *wu-ʾére tken ʿalm be-ʾélhe di-díye mes kån*
'Ere bedeutet ein Zeichen an einer Kuh von guter Gattung' (SAE VI 313.6–7)[20]

(31) *wa-ʿéygek laḥré* ***meš*** *min* ***kån***
'Ich möchte aber **dein Ebenbild** suchen...' (SAE VI 196.2–3)

(32) *mek ken hálhal*
'Sieh den Tölpel!' (SAE VII 10.16)[21]

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[19] ***dse*** *le-****šém*** 'from **her name**'.

[20] *di-díye* ***mes kån***, literally '**its breed** is good'.

[21] Literally, 'your kind is idiot' (= 'the kind of person you are is an idiot').

‘appearance’ [ŝeném] (LS 431)

(33) *wa-meš ŝéne tió ŝéne di-mlák*
‘Er war anzusehen wie ein Engel Gottes’ (SAE VI 15.13)[22]

(34) *wa-**meš ŝíneh** mifzáʿeh*
‘Und **sein Ansehen** war furchtbar’ (SAE VI 33.1–2)

(35) *wu-més ŝenéh díye*
‘das Aussehen ist hübsch’ (SAE VI 175.22)[23]

Other pertinent possessums are designations of sizes and prices.

‘length’ [rímo]

(36) *di-lémi šeʿúrok mer-rínhem wu-méš rímo dirā́ḥ wu-šézir*
‘Di-lemi wird im Meere gefangen, er ist eine Elle und eine Spanne lang’ (SAE VI 324.20–21)[24]

(37) *ʿéẓiẓ… meš rímoh ŝézir*
‘Eine Angel wird… eine Spanne lang’ (SAE VI 209.15–17)

(38) *dihé rey meš rímoh baḥ*
‘Sein Kopf ist eine Spanne lang’ (SAE VII 98.16)

‘breadth’ [rṓḥbo]

(39) *wa-min ḥémseh ʾom mes réḥboh dirā́ʿain*
‘Eine große Schildkröte ist zwei Ellen breit’ (SAE VI 325.20–21)[25]

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[22] *meš ŝéne* ‘his appearance’.

[23] *més ŝenéh* ‘her appearance’.

[24] *méš rímo*, literally ‘its length (is)’.

[25] *Mes réḥboh* ‘its breadth’. Note that the pronominal possession (*mes réḥboh*) is anticipated by the nominal one (left dislocation), where the *men*-marking is copied (*wa-min ḥémseh ʾom*).

(40) *ʿéʒiʒ… méš réḥboh íṣbaḥ wa-faḳḥ*
'Eine Angel wird… einen Finger[26] breit' (SAE VI 209.15–18)

'weight' [mḯzān]

(41) *ʿémor heh be-**mos** be-**mḯzān***
'Und er sagte zu ihm: Um **ihr Gewicht**' (SAE IV 150.4–5)[27]

'bride-price' [mhar][28]

(42) *kem mes mhar*
'Wie hoch ist der Kaufpreis?' (SAE VI 150.27)[29]

(43) *iném **mes mhar***
'Was ist **ihr Werbepreis**?' (SAE VII 23.5)

'price' [ḥáyhor][30]

(44) *di-*[*te*]*áraḥ mes ḥáyhor muʾiéno*
'…welches einhundert wert ist' (SAE VII 74.8–9)[31]

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[26] Correct to 'one finger and a half'.

[27] Cf. SAE IV 150.6–7, 9–10. Interestingly, in 6–7 and 9–10 Müller adduces *di-* as a variant for *men*. As far as lines 6–7 are concerned, the use of *di-* is actually expected according to the distributional rules outlined in §1: *ezáʿes be mos be-mḯzan* (*be-dse mḯzān*) 'I take her for (the price amounting to) her weight' (the possessive pronoun is coreferent with the object pronoun of the verb 'to take').

[28] But note *di*-marking in *bíši ši kål di-ḯ mhar* 'Ich hatte nur deinen Werbepreis' (SAE VII 76.20).

[29] *mes mhar* 'her bride-price'.

[30] Glossed by Arabic *qīma* 'price' in the edition. Cf. LS 173 ('nombre').

[31] *mes ḥáyhor* 'her price'. Contrast *di*-marking in *wa-ʿá tíbʿol kål dse mhar muʾiénoh* 'Und heirate nur eine, deren Werbepreis hundert ist' (SAE VII 73.18).

'price' [ḳíme]

(45) *w-išédion mes ḳ́meh*
'...und teilen den Erlös dafür unter sich' (SAE VI 13.5)[32]

(46) *ġāliyeh* ***mésen ḳ́meh***
'**deren Preis** hoch ist' (SAE VI 44.5)

The noun *ʿed*, when used with the meaning 'age', must also belong here. It appears with *men*-marking twice (SAE VI 145.22 and 147.1–2), as against one instance of *di*-marking (SAE VI 146.5).

The noun *néfaʿ*, when it designates a constant characteristic, namely, a person's job or permanent occupation, may also belong here (see below, §2.2.9, for the relevant passages).

### 2.2.5. Body Parts Detached from Their Hosts

In CSOL I–II, the contexts in which the canonical body parts are detached from the body and are thus no longer integral parts, display vacillation between *di*-marking and *men*-marking (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.2.5). In the Vienna corpus, the pertinent examples are rare,[33] and in most of them, *men*-marking is employed.

[32] *mes ḳ́meh* 'its price'.

[33] Passages in which *men* is governed by a verb of separation and, therefore, best interpreted as an ablative preposition, are not treated in the present section.

‘bone’ [ṣṓḥḷo]: *mes/meš/may ʾéṣḥal* (SAE VI 108.1, 2, 3, 4, 10), *may l-éṣḥal* (SAE VI 119.5)

‘skull’ [ḳalḥémoh] (LS 375; Simeone-Senelle and Lonnet 1991, 1462): *meš ḳalḥémoh di rey* (SAE VI 119.7)

‘skull’ [gemgémo]

(47) *wu-ḳéṣomk meš be-gémgemó*
‘…und zum Frühstück den Kopf gegessen’ (SAE VI 353.12)[34]

‘eye’ [ʕayn]

(48) *we-ḥeyáṭoh **mes** le-**ʿaíni** be-ṣéfḥah*
‘[Die Tante] nähte **ihre Augen** in ein Tuch’ (SAE VII 65.17–18)

In the following example, *di*-marking is employed.

(49) ***dihó ʿaíni** bé-ʾed di-fírehim dihó di-ḥéloh*
‘**Meine Augen** sind in der Hand meiner Cousine’ (SAE VII 69.7–8)

### 2.2.6. ‘Non-physical Body Parts’ and Other Non-physical Inalienable Possessums

The noun *ʿed* ‘life, life duration, endpoint of life’ is compatible with *men*-marking. However, there is a good deal of vacillation in those contexts where *men*-marking would be expected for a ‘canonical body part’ (note similar vacillation for *ʿed* with the meaning ‘age’ in §2.2.4).

(50) *loyk moy be-ʿed*
‘Ich habe ihm die Seele genommen’ (SAE IV 62.5–6, 7–8)[35]

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[34] *ḳéṣomk meš be-gémgemó* ‘I had its skull for breakfast’.

[35] *loyk moy be-ed* ‘I’ve caught his soul’.

(51) *tzá‘a* ***ménhi ‘ed***
‘Nimm **mein Leben**’ (SAE VI 27.17)

(52) *l*(*y*)*iṭár* ***maš ‘ed***
‘Gott erhalte **dein Leben**’ (SAE VI 51.25)

For *men*-marking see also SAE VI 91.10; 139.17; SAE VII 84.19–20. For *di*-marking see SAE IV 77.7; 95.13; 100.5–6; 153.6–8; SAE VI 28.12; 31.1; 34.5; 64.27–28; 83.13; 177.5; 200.18.

Another potential example of a ‘non-physical body part’ term is *kébšeb* ‘luck’.[36]

(53) *díyye* ***mak kíbšib***
‘**Dein Stern** ist gut glücklich’ (SAE IV 102.10–11)

Finally, *ó’orem* ‘road, way’, figuratively employed in SAE VI 200.8 as ‘meaning, sense’ (cf. example (83) in Bulakh and Kogan 2025), can well be seen as an instance of non-physical inalienable possessum:

(54) *itá meš ’órim dé di-méthal*
‘Dies ist der Sinn des Gedichtes’ (SAE VI 200.8)[37]

### 2.2.7. Place–Inhabitant Relations

Place–inhabitant relations are consistently marked with *men* in the Vienna corpus, as opposed to CSOL I–II, where *men*-marking

[36] According to a personal communication from Miranda Morris, *kébšeb* ‘lucky star, destiny’ is never used in the literary meaning ‘star’ and is thus opposed to *kébkeb* which can mean both ‘star’ and ‘luck’.

[37] *itá meš ’órim* ‘Thus is its meaning’.

is only rarely observed in such contexts. The most instructive examples involve *ḳáʿar* 'house'. In the Vienna corpus, its possessor is always introduced by *men* when it is used with the meaning 'place of residence', apparently perceived as a constant quality, similar to such characteristics as name or size (for which see §2.2.4).

(55) *wa-**més ḳáʿer** be-ʿamḳ di-ʾórim*
'... **deren Haus** an der Mitte des Weges war' (SAE VI 53.13)

(56) *hóʾo **mak ḳáʿer***
'Wo ist **dein Haus**?' (SAE VI 66.9)

(57) *ʾéhe bug **may ḳáʿer***
'Hier ist **sein Haus**' (SAE VI 81.6)

(58) *wa-yeʿúrob **may ḳáʿer***
'Und **sein Haus** wird erkannt werden' (SAE VI 87.5)

(59) *wa-**may ḳáʿer** be-kā̆m*
'**Sein Haus** war in Kām' (SAE VI 140.5)

*Di*-marking is used when the noun designates the structure itself.

(60) *keséʾenš h(y)éraḳ **di-ḥan** min **ḳáʿer***
'Wir haben ihm stehlend in **unserem Hause** gefunden' (SAE VI 122.20–21)

(61) *wu-nkóbihin **dihín** be-**ḳáʿer***
'Wir wollen... sie in **ihr Haus** eintreten lassen' (SAE VI 124.3)

(62) *tṣáyaḥ be-**díse** be-**ḳáʿar***
'Leuchtet es hell in **ihrem Gemach**' (SAE VI 186.6)

(63) *ldí eʿámer heš mesḗgid le-thér* ***di-ī́*** *di-****ḳáʿer***
'O könnte ich Moscheen dir bauen vor der Türe **deines Hauses**' (SAE VI 204.16)

(64) *ldi esóbiš* ***dihó ḳáʿer***
'O könnte ich wegtragen dich, **mein Haus**' (SAE VI 251.15)

(65) *ldi eʿáḳab sérambíleh be-ʿámḳ be-****diʾī́*** *be-****ḳáʿer***
'O dass ich ein Strickbett werde in der Mitte **deines Zimmers**' (SAE VI 286.18)

(66) *ḳalhéten* ***di-ī́*** *be-****ḳáʿer***
'die kleinen Kinder in **deiner Stube**' (SAE VI 287.6)

Perhaps the same semantic nuance explains *di*-marking for *mâ̂sen* 'house' in SAE VI 226.5.

(67) *rud salām* ***dihó*** *le-****mâ̂sen***
'Grüße mir **mein** geliebtes **Haus**'

The nouns *ḥalf* 'place' and *metḥálhel* 'residence' likewise consistently receive *men*-marking.

(68) *wu-díš ʿážeh mes ḥalf le-ʾamt rínhem*
'Und diese Frau war von der Seite des Meeres' (SAE VI 177.15–16)[38]

(69) *wa-ʿaig di-kån* ***meš ḥalf*** *be-mtáḳoʿoh*
'Und ein Mann, der **seinen Sitz** auf M. hatte' (SAE VI 179.23–24)

(70) *ʿážeh di-****més ḥalf*** *le-ʾámt rínhem*
'Eine Frau, **deren Wohnort** an der Meeresküste lag' (SAE VI 216.17)

(71) ***méyhen metḥálhel*** *be-ḥágeher*
'...**dessen Wohnort** im Haghergebirge ist' (SAE VI 161.9)

[38] *mes ḥalf* 'her (native) place'.

(72) *ʿáli bar sínaḥ may metḥálhel be-ḥadíbu*
'A. b. S.s Wohnsitz war Hadibu' (SAE VI 245.19–20)[39]

Unlike in CSOL I–II, in the Vienna corpus practically all instances of *di*-marking with *ḥalf* can be explained by the rules of referential choice, as in SAE VI 179.25; 206.20; 232.16, 17; 258.12; 259.10; 283.13; 291.19; 295.13; 300.21; 311.4; 318.19; 329.5; 334.22; 335.2. The only anamolous case of *di*-marking is in SAE VI 339.1.

(73) *yeʿámer* ***dihé ḥalf*** *biš šírmehin*
'Er sagt: In **seinem Lande** ist ein dichter Baumwuchs'

### 2.2.8. Personal Belongings in Close Physical Contact with Their Possessor and Other 'Body Parts by Association'

Items of clothing can sporadically feature *men*-marking (for similar examples in modern Soqotri, see Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.2.8).

'clothes' [fíḳha]

(74) *wa-ʿám tšámaḥ be-yesûʿ gedóḥo id etíhi min sáriš wu-lehémoh* ***meš fíḳeha***
'Und als sie hörte von Jesu, kam sie hin zur Menge von hinter ihm her und betastete **sein Kleid**' (Bittner 1918, 114.27)

Contrast *di*-marking in the following passages.

[39] *may metḥálhel* 'his residence'.

(75) *ber se ʿeméroh ke láhamk ḥeb* ***dihé fíḳeha*** *terofk*
'Denn sie sagte: Wann ich betaste nur **sein Kleid**, werde ich gesund!' (Bittner 1918, 114.27, on the same page as (74))

(76) *mon léhem* ***dihó fíḳeha***
'Wer hat betastet **mein Kleid**?' (Bittner 1918, 114.30)

'pillow' [ʕéymed] (LS 313)

(77) *neḥáṭ mes ʿéymed* (*rey*)
'ihr zu Häupten' (SAE VI 41.21)[40]

In the following examples, *men*-marking is perhaps motivated by the fact that the actual reference is to the ear which functions as "blanket" in a fairy tale.

'blanket' [míškɛl]

(78) *wa-énḳef ídihīn de ʿaig wa-škel* ***may*** *min* ***míškel***
'Und er breitete das Ohr des Mannes aus und hüllte sich in **seine Hülle**' (SAE IV 102.17–18)[41]

(79) *názef may min nízaf ū škól* ***may*** *min* ***míškel***
'Breite aus sein Gewand und hülle dich in **seine Hülle**' (SAE IV 103.6–7, see also 9–10)[42]

'bed' [níʒ̣af]

(80) *názef* ***may*** *min* ***nízaf*** *ū škól may min míškel*
'Breite aus **sein Gewand** und hülle dich in seine Hülle' (SAE IV 103.6–7, see also 9–10)

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[40] *neḥáṭ mes ʿéymed* 'under her pillow'.

[41] Note *di*-marking in the version of the same text in the Abd al-Kuri variety (SAE IV 102.17–18).

[42] See the preceding fn.

By extension, a few other objects closely associated with their possessors can be used with *men*-marking. Thus, *eḳníyo* ‘food’ is once attested with *men*-marking.

(81) ***mékin eḳonío*** *dihó men ḳáʿer tzéʿe*
‘**Eure Speisen** sollt ihr aus meinem Hause hohlen’ (SAE VI 88.3)

Contrast *di*-marking in SAE VI 79.8 and 11 (in accordance with the distribution rules).

(82) *nókiʿen ínhi* ***dihó ʾeḳonío*** *itok*
‘Bring mir **mein Essen** dorthin’ (SAE VI 79.8, see also 79.11)

The designations of “shadow” and “image” are likewise used with *men*-marking in the Vienna corpus, perhaps being perceived as parts of the object they reflect/represent.[43]

‘shadow’ [mihľóʕo]

(83) *ʿaf l-yédir nḥaṭ* ***mes miloʿoh***
‘Bis daß er wohnt unter **seinem Schatten**’ (Bittner 1918, 94.32)

‘something similar, commensurate; image’ [ḳadár]

(84) *ledí edóy* ***meš*** *min* ***ḳádar***
‘O könnte ich **dein Bildnis** schicken…’ (SAE VI 195.20)

At the same time, *gétta* ‘body, shape’ is once unexpectedly attested with *di*-marking in the Vienna corpus, perhaps to be explained by the fact that the term belongs to the periphery of the

[43] It is noteworthy that *mihl’óʿo* is once marked with a possessive suffix (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.6).

part–whole relation (contrast *men*-marking in CSOL as discussed in Bulakh and Kogan 2025, Section 3.2.1).

(85) *gédeḥ wu-zégid* ***dihé gítteh***
'...kamen sie und hoben auf **seinen Leichnam**' (Bittner 1918, 134.29)

Compare also *di*-marking in the following example, where the close association between the two objects could otherwise have triggered *men*-marking.

(86) *wa-ʿéymer ṭháreš šéreŝ se wa dsé di-ríkob*
'Man legte auf ihn den Bauch mit dem Magen' (SAE VI 298.20)[44]

### 2.2.9. Relation between the Name of an Action/State and Its Argument

The Vienna corpus yields several clear cases of *men*-marking introducing the argument of a verbal noun, a feature only seldom attested in CSOL I–II (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.2.9). Thus, there are six examples in which the argument of a monovalent deverbal derivative is encoded as a pronominal possessor.

'sleeping' [dɛ́mi]

(87) *wu-díš ʿážeh mes ḥalf le-ʾamt rínhem*
'Und diese Frau war von der Seite des Meeres' (SAE VI 177.15–16)[45]

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[44] The exact translation is 'the rumen (first stomach) and its (the rumen's) omasum (third stomach)'. Good photographic illustrations of the underlying picture can be found in CSOL II.658–61.

[45] *mes ḥalf* 'her (native) place'.

‘staying’ [déro]

(88) *kån* ***meš déroh*** *be-ḳóbehor*
‘Es war **sein Aufenthalt** in den Gräbern’ (Bittner 1918, 102.3)

‘nakedness’ [miftíṭaʕ]

(89) *wa-di-ízʿem mes le-fáne iŝóni* ***mes miftíṭaḥ***
‘Derjenige, der von hir sitzt, kann **ihre Blöße** sehen’ (SAE VI 323.6–7)

‘aggression, struggle’ [šeníḥo]

(90) *wa-yhé rázaḥ wa-ŝíri* ***mes*** *min* ***šiníḥoh***
‘Und er wurde müde und abgemagert wegen **ihrer Widerspenstigkeit**’ (SAE VI 299.4–5)

‘dining’ [taẓímo] and ‘sleeping’ [mší?ef]

(91) *méki teẓaímoh ṭey wu-méki mšíʾef ṭād*
‘Wir essen das Nachtmahl zusammen und schlafen zusammen’ (SAE VII 86.28–29)[46]

The following nouns, arguably bivalent, are also recorded with the agent encoded as the possessor (and the patient unexpressed).

‘help’ [méded]

(92) *méded ménhi be-gúnhin*
‘In Gunhin suche bei mir Hilfe!’ (SAE VI 310.16)[47]

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[46] *méki teẓaímoh ṭey wu-méki mšíʾef ṭād* ‘our dinner (is) one and our sleeping (place) is one’.

[47] *méded ménhi* ‘my help’ (= ‘help I can provide’).

(93) *náʿe* ***ménhi méded*** *ål béhel… sḗmak tekóse ménhi méded*
‘**Meine Hilfe** ist jetzt noch nicht fertig … dann wirst du bei mir Hilfe finden’ (SAE VI 311.3–5)

‘friendship’ [ʔéyhin]

(94) *trå maʿtiʒ̣(y)áni béne wu-lól yéʾte* ***mḗhi ʾéyhin*** *ål imóle kufíyye wål bíleh d(y)aḥ̂is*
‘Zwei sind ineinander sehr verliebt, und wenn man **ihre Freundschaft** absammelt, füllt sie nicht eine Mütze oder eine andere Sache’ (SAE VI 364.11–13)

‘meaning’ [ʒ̣íl̓iʕ][48]

(95) *diól man manḳaínaḥ yeʿórib* ***mes*** *be-****ʒ̣éyleḥ***
‘Wer nicht töricht ist, wird **seine** [dieses Gedichten] **Deutung** wissen’ (SAE VI 155.15)

(96) *meš ʒ̣éylaḥ tió dé di-min nîére*
‘Der Sinn ist wie der des vorangehenden Verses’ (SAE VI 296.3)[49]

(97) ***méš ʒ̣éyleḥ*** *mébroi di-šédd*
‘…**dessen Erklärung** (ist) “die zwei Kinder des Donners”’ (Bittner 1918, 64.17)

In the following example, the patient of the verbal noun is encoded as the direct object (“entering **GN**”), whereas the agent is encoded as the possessor (“**their** entering”).

[48] This is the verbal noun of *ʒ̣ála*ʿ ‘to tell’ (note that the semantic shift ‘to tell’ > ‘to mean’ is known for the noun, but not for the source verb).

[49] *meš ʒ̣éylaḥ* ‘its meaning’.

(98) *wa-kon mihí líkbe Bêt-Laḥem*
'...als sie in Betlehem ankamen' (SAE IV 48.19)[50]

Remarkably, it is not always the subject which is encoded as the possessor. Compare the two examples below, both involving *rébne* 'decision; order, command'.

(99) *wa-yhén ål hémeḥ* ***mes ríbneh***
'Sie aber gehorchten **ihrem Befehl** nicht' (SAE VI 177.10–11)

(100) ***mes ríbneh*** *dsé-ke bíoh*
'**Die Entscheidung über sie** ist bei ihrer Mutter' (SAE VI 41.29)

In the first example, the possessor of *ríbneh* 'advice' is the agent, but in the second one it is an adjunct ("her decision" = "decision about her").

In the following two examples, the direct object of the verbal noun is encoded as the possessor.

'watching' [maʕtíbher]

(101) *menhe maʿtíbher be-míʾet ríyal*
'Ich bin zu sehen um hundert Thaler' (SAE IV 155.1–3, see also 9–10)[51]

[50] *mihí líkbe* stands for **méyhi ḷe-kᵉbe* 'at their entering', cf. *ʿinda duḫūlihimā* in the parallel Arabic text.

[51] *menhe maʿtíbher* 'my watching' (= 'to watch me').

‘kiss(ing)’ [mišré?iš]

(102) *ʿémor í meš mišréʾiš ʿar ḥfaŝ ḥey be-neʿésoh di-ṣóde*
‘Er sagte: ‘Du, dein Kuß ist nur leicht, um ein bißchen Fische’ (SAE VII 20.11–13)[52]

A few other possessive constructions can be seen as encoding the relation between the action/state and an argument. The difference between these cases and those discussed above is that there is no immediate verbal source for the head nouns – which, nevertheless, refer to actions or states and, as such, can be seen as semantic equivalents of verbal nouns.

‘condition’ [šarṭ][53]

(103) *wu-ntúḥo dé yeʿámer* ***mak šarṭ*** *mebʿéloh wu-dež teʿámer* ***ménhi šarṭ*** *ʿáže*
‘Und sie stritten, der sagte: **Dein Bedingnis** ist die Sklavin, und der sagte: **Mein Bedingnis** war die Frau’ (SAE VII 82.8–10)

‘need’ [ḥā́geh][54]

(104) ***ménhi ḥā́geh*** *ʿeyk libʿól di-ḗ fírehim*
‘**Mein Begehr** ist, deine Tochter zu heiraten’ (SAE VII 75.25–26)

‘strength’ [láfi]

(105) *l(y)ítbur mak láfi*
‘Gott zerbreche dich’ (SAE VII 20.13–14)[55]

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[52] *meš mišréʾiš* ‘your kiss(ing)’ (= ‘to kiss you’).

[53] An Arabism (LS 422).

[54] An Arabism (LS 166).

[55] Literally, ‘may your strength be broken!’.

'illness' [góḷe]

(106) *ldi ehámaḥ* ***meš*** *be-****g(y)óleh***
'O könnt' ich hören von **der Krankheit dein**...' (SAE VI 223.16)[56]

The *men*-marked possessor of *órem* 'way, road' can also be seen as the semantic exponent of the agent in the following example.

(107) *wa-máyhi ʾórim déher le-múʕ̣aha*
'Sie... mußten immer Mudaha passieren' (SAE VI 304.8–9)[57]

In the following example, the semantic relation between the participant introduced by *men* (the Arabic loanword *duwē* 'medicine') is to be interpreted as that of an action and its patient ("my medicine" = "the medicine which cures me").

(108) *ʿémor hês iném* ***moš duwē***
'Er sprach zu ihr: Was ist **deine Heilung**?' (SAE IV 96.22–23, see also 98.4–5)[58]

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[56] Contrast *di*-marking in *w-eḥóṣi di-í min g*(*y*)*óleh* '...und so erkunde [ich] deine Krankheit' (SAE VI 233.4).

[57] *máyhi ʾórim* 'their way'.

[58] Contrast *di*-marking in the same phrase, *wa-ʿémero heh diho duwē ʿaṣab dih min šérhom* 'Sie sprach zu ihm: Mein Heilmittel ist ein Zweig jenes Baumes' (SAE IV 96.23–25, as well as *bíši dihó duwē kål hal-yéḥye* 'Mein Heilmittel ist Hal-yeḥye' (SAE IV 97.23). In the parallel Abd al-Kuri version, the first passage displays the *men*-marking both in the question and the answer, whereas the second example employs *di*-marking exactly as does the main Soqotri text.

Finally, *néfaʿ*, a verbal noun of *náfaʿ* ‘to do’, introduces the agent via *men*-marking in the following examples, where its meaning is ‘deed’ or ‘way of doing, behaviour’.

(109) *wa-loṭ ŝíni állāh* ***maíhin nefeʿhéten***
‘Als nun Gott **ihr Tun** gewahrte…’ (SAE VI 27.4)

(110) *itá* ***ménhi néfaḥ*** *wu-ʾeʿágub d-íryem mífdoḳ*
‘Dies ist **meine Art**, ich liebe lange Knäule’ (SAE VI 115.18)[59]

The same noun can refer to a person’s occupation as a constant characteristic (thus, rather belonging to §2.2.4).

(111) *iném* ***mak náfaḥ***
‘Was ist **dein Gewerbe**?’ (SAE VI 24.10)

(112) ***ménhi néfaḥ*** *ḳéyū*
‘…so ist **mein Geschäft** Stricke’ (SAE VI 115.7)

Still another meaning of *néfaʿ* is ‘the (amount of) work to be done (for somebody)’,[60] with the beneficiary introduced via *di*-marking. As in CSOL I–II (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.2.9 fn. 35), it is unclear whether *men*-marking is possible here: the choice of *di-* may be explained by the presence of the antecedent (*ínhi* ‘to me’) within the same clause.

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[59] Contrast *di*-marking in *ho ḥtílihik… lóʾo… di-ḗ min néfāḥ* ‘– Ich machte ein Fehlgeburt. – Warum? – Durch deine Tat’ (SAE VI 118.8–9), *wa-láken dhêt néfaḥ kēmil ken állāh* ‘Und es sei dir voller Lohn von dem Herrn’ (SAE IV 51.12), *kal ṭā́dehen éʾefo be-ḳáʿer šiš dihé néfaḥ* ‘…[daß] jeder im Hause seinen Dienst leiste’ (SAE VI 217.13–14).

[60] *ʿémo(r)k ínhi dihó néfāḥ* ‘Hast du mir meine Sachen gemacht?’ (= ‘the objects I have ordered from you‘) (SAE VI 84.23).

Finally, there are two examples in which the *men*-marked possessive pronoun refers to the direct object of *néfaʿ* (note that the verb *náfaʿ* can be used as a transitive verb with the meaning ‘to treat [somebody], to process [something]’).

(113) *iném may néfaʿ*
‘Was soll mit ihm geschehen?’ (SAE VI 16.9)[61]

(114) *ū be-régeb ibóde may be-néfaʿ*
‘Und im Monate Regeb beginnt die Arbeit’ (SAE VI 43.20)[62]

### 2.3. Ambiguous *men*

If the *men*-marked possessive construction syntactically depends on a verb of detaching, *men* can be understood as a true ablative preposition dependent directly on the verb. This can be illustrated via the following examples.

‘skin, hide’ [gad]

(115) *iṣúlob fáʿhar wa-izúʿa* ***meš gad***
‘Es wird geschlachtet und man zieht ihm die Haut ab’ (SAE VI 249.2–3) = ‘**its skin** is taken off’ or ‘**the skin** is taken **from it**’

(116) *ṣéṭar ʿoiéghen le-kálb wa-dóḥes* ***may ŝérihi***
‘Und der Jüngling schoß einen Hund und zog sein Fell ab’ (SAE VII 62.21–22) = ‘he flayed **his skin**’ or ‘he flayed **the skin from it**’

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[61] Literally, ‘what (is) his deed’ (= ‘what will be done to him’).

[62] Literally, ‘they start with its (frankincense’s) work’ (harvesting of frankincense is meant).

‘dates’ [bɛ́ʔi]

(117) *zéʿayk* ***mes bé’i***
‘…von dem ich halbreife Datteln nahm’ (SAE VI 120.19) = ‘I took **its dates**’ or ‘I took **the dates from it**’ (about a branch of a tree)

(118) *iḳúṣe ʾéḳre min míšer wa-izúʿa* ***meš ʿéyṣob***
‘…und wird davon… ein Zweiglein genommen’ (SAE VI 311.9) = ‘**its branch** is taken’ or ‘**a branch** is taken **from it**’

For similar examples in CSOL I–II see Bulakh and Kogan (2025, §3.3).

## 2.4. Terms for Bodily Liquids/Excretions/Exhalations and the ‘Product–source’ Relation

The use of *men* in certain contexts can be seen as a neutral position between the ablative *men*, marking the product–source relation, and the synchronic possessive marker *men*, marking certain peripheral instances of the part–whole relation (their marginality arising from contexts where the part is being/has been detached from its whole).

In the first place, this involves bodily liquids, excretions, secretions, and exhalations, as well as those body parts which are more frequently mentioned when they are separated from the body itself.

'blood' [dor]: *mes dur* (SAE VI 58.2–3, 14, 22), *may dur* (SAE VI 87.30)

'excrement' [ʕob]

(119) *liḳʿód mak le-medrémi * may ʿeb ḥáher di-bā́mbe*
'Es fließe nieder auf die Fersen dir * der schwarze Dreck von deiner Hirse' (SAE VI 309.6–7)[63]

(120) *di-yúta **may ʿeb***
'**Der Dreck wessen** wird gegessen?' (SAE VI 360.19)[64]

(121) *wu-géleménoh šem di-nóyhir wa-šém **mes** di-**ʿéb** wa-yizúʿa **mes ʿeb** wa-yeʿúmor le-bā́mbe ḳehór tken díye*
'*G.* wird sowohl von der Fledermaus als auch von **ihren Exkrementen** gesagt. **Ihre Exkremente** werden geholt und auf die Bambesaat gelegt, damit sie gedeihe' (SAE VI 227–228)

'mucus, slime' [níŝyeṭ]

(122) ***mes níŝyeṭ** íken míšḥaṣ d(y)ehéb*
'**Ihr Nasenauswurf** wird Goldmünze' (SAE VII 64.11–12)

'warmth' [šéhɛm]

(123) *ke-šeṭóʾoh **mak šáham** * lónšek hek id maʿféneh*
'Wenn es spürt **deine Wärme** * Pißt es dir in das Gewand' (SAE VI 338.7–8)

(124) *náfaḥ tho min ser ʿarébeh * min ser máḥderá **mes šáham***
'Ich fühlte durch die Mauer * und durch den Vorhang **ihre Wärme**' (SAE VI 236.22–23)

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[63] The internal form of the latter part of the couplet—and, therefore, its relevance for our issue—is uncertain. Since *bámbe* 'millet' is feminine, *may* cannot relate to it. The millet's 'black dung' is, evidently, the bat guano used as fertiliser (see below, present subsection).

[64] A riddle for hand-mill, its grain, and flour.

'Voice' and 'speech, words' can also be classified together with body products (see Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.4).

'voice' [ʕárho]

(125) *wa-hó hímaʿk* ***may ʿárhoh***
'Ich habe **seine Stimme** gehört' (SAE VI 212.12–13)

'word, speech' [métaḷ]

(126) *lol igódiḥen* ***mak méthal***
'Wenn **dein Wort** eintrifft…' (SAE VI 16.7–8)

(127) *karáme ål teḥómil* ***ménhi méthal***
'Wenn du **meine Rede** nicht verträgst…' (SAE VI 64.6–7)

(128) *wål teʿórib* ***máyhin méthal***
'Und sie kennt nicht **deren Sprache**' (SAE VI 357.18)

(129) *karáme* ***mes méthal*** *kon ʾímehen dížen mes méthal íken ʾímehen*
'Wenn **ihre Rede** wahr ist, wird auch die Rede der andern wahr sein' (SAE VII 61.27–29)[65]

(130) ***mes méthal*** *ímehen*
'**Ihre Rede** ist wahr' (SAE VII 69.2–3)[66]

(131) *himáʿken* ***meš méthal***
'Höret ihr **seine Rede'** (SAE VII 87.4–5)

Contrast a few rare examples of *di*-marking with the same lexeme:

(132) *karáme igódiḥen* ***di-ḗ méthal***
'Wenn **dein Wort** eintrifft…' (SAE VI 16.25–26)

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[65] *mes méthal* 'her speech'.

[66] Note *di*-marking in a similar context in *di-ḗ méthal ímehen* 'Deine Rede ist wahr' (SAE VII 81.9–10).

(133) *ål kán de **dihó méthal***
'War dies nicht **meine Rede**...' (SAE VI 27.11)

This type of relation involves body parts of animals which can be used, as food or material, after being detached from the animal's body.

'milk' [ŝḥaf]

(134) *ḥélobk **mes ŝḥof***
'Und ich melkte **ihre Milch**' (SAE VI 120.13)

(135) *ʿémor **mésin ŝḥof** id gízeher*
'Er tat **ihre Milch** in den Butterschlauch' (SAE VI 128.27; 130.7)

(136) *wa-tió ʿéyrob **mésin ŝḥof** id gízeher*
'Und als **ihre Milch** in den Butterschlauch kam...' (SAE VI 128.28–29)

(137) *di-ål tomézog ʿážeh **mes ŝḥof***
'...**deren Milch** eine Frau nicht trinken darf' (SAE VI 128.31)

(138) *ḥelébo mésin ŝḥof*
'[Sie] melkten sie' (SAE VI 129.7)[67]

(139) *nḥólib **mésen ŝḥof***
'Wir melkten **ihre Milch**' (SAE VI 147.6–7)

'meat' [tɛ]

(140) *wăl yúte **may té***
'Und wird **sein Fleisch** nicht gegessen' (SAE VI 12.8–9)

(141) *ū-**méš te** ʿémor id menéḳahal*
'Und **dessen Fleisch** tat er in Wassereimer' (SAE VI 87.31)

[67] *mésin ŝḥof* 'their (the goats') milk'.

(142) *wu-fêŝiŝ* ***mésin*** *be-****té***
'Er warf **ihr Fleisch**' (SAE VI 123.20)

'contents of a ruminant's stomach' [fort][68]

(143) *wa-ʿémor may dur ū-****méš fort*** *id nógir*
'Er tat **dessen** Blut und **Mist** in die Grube' (SAE VI 87.30)

The same ambiguity can arise with a few other instances of the part–whole construction.

'flour (from a hand-mill)' [daḳ́īḳ]

(144) *dé ráḥa wa-yúta* ***may daḳ́ḳ*** *d-išrágaḥ may min mer*
'Das ist die Mühle **deren Mehl** wird gegessen, welches herauskommt aus ihrem Bauch' (SAE VI 360.20–21): 'its flour' or 'the flour from it'

'fragments' [tíbihor]

(145) *ho ŝink* ***máyhi tíbihor***
'Ich sah **die Trümer derselben**' (SAE VI 176.11): 'their fragments' or 'the fragments (left) from them', about two ships after a shipwreck

This involves, in particular, parts of plants and especially their fruit.

'*ziziphus* fruit' [žiréme]

(146) *wu-tók* (*toyk*) ***mes žíreham***
'[Ich] aß **dessen Früchte**' (SAE VI 120.5)

[68] German *Mist* in the translation is not quite exact, see Naumkin et al. (2018, 662) for an image.

‘bark, peel’ [ḳalífo]

(147) *wål ṭáʿla li-ḳóḥḳoḥ meš ḳalífo tió ŝáḥez*
‘Und es ist nicht nötig die Rinde anzuschalen, wie beim Weihrauchbaum’ (SAE VI 232.6–7)[69]

‘tamarind fruit’ [ḥóubhɛḷ]

(148) *ṣúbehor di-yúte* ***meš ḥóbehal***
‘eine Tamarinde … **deren… Früchte** gegessen werden’ (SAE VI 205.5–6)

‘inflorescence’ [ráḳaḥ]

(149) *ʿa tgérim* ***mes ráḳaḥ***
‘Pflücket **ihre Früchte** nicht’ (SAE VI 312.10)

‘sprig of male inflorescence’ [ʕáṣab] (SAE IV 96.24–25)

In each of the pertinent passages, *men* can be interpreted in two ways—as a possessive marker or ablative preposition. It may well be that it was via this position that the possessive function of *men* developed (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §4.2).

As in CSOL I–II, *di*-marking is also possible in contexts of this type.

(150) *ʿaíni di-díhi ídmeḥ di-tiḳóʿed méhi*
‘Die beiden Augen, in denen die Tränen sind, die aus ihnen niederfließen’ (SAE VI 363.14–15)[70]

(151) *ber-yhé áʾaḥan wu-****diḥán te***
‘Denn er ist unser Bruder und **unser Fleisch**’ (SAE VII 49.23)

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[69] *meš ḳalífo* ‘its bark’.

[70] *ʿaíni di-díhi ídmeḥ di-tiḳóʿed méhi* ‘the two eyes whose tears flow from them’.

(152) ***di-ī́ fonŝ*** *ber ål-šeʿáliḳk*
'Denn **deinen Atem** liebe ich gar sehr' (SAE VI 220.23)

## 3.0. The Choice between *di*-marking and *men*-marking for the Part–Whole Relation

As a whole, the evidence of the Vienna corpus agrees with the trends previously outlined by us for CSOL I–II: *di*-marked possessive pronouns are mostly used with highly accessible referents (thus, a *di*-marked pronoun is typically co-referent with another constituent within the same clause, most frequently its subject), whereas *men*-marked possessive pronouns are almost exclusively employed with referents of low accessibility.

To illustrate the essential agreement between the two corpora at this point, we will compare the extant evidence with *éʾed* 'hand, arm' as the possessum. For CSOL I–II, see Bulakh and Kogan (2025, §3.5.2). In the Vienna corpus, the distribution outlined above is observed in the following cases.

### 3.1. *Men*-marking (22 examples)

(153) *wu-tkéno tri* ***meš*** *bé-*ʾ***ed***
'Und es sind nun zwei in **seiner Hand'** (SAE VI 195.16)

(154) *ʿaig di-zéʿe ḳómeh di-ʿaḳároh wu-més ḥĕh k*(*y*)*ófid wa-ʿéygib l*(*y*)*ihréḳ mes wål* ʾ*ekéboh* ***meš*** ʾ***éed*** *id ḳéne*
'Ein Mann, der ein großes Gefäß, dessen Öffnung schmal ist, nahm und daraus stehlen wollte, **dessen Hand** aber ins Innere nicht eindringen konnte' (SAE VI 319.5–7)

(155) *wa-hímaḥ íhin eʾḥáyhen dé-eb wenfériš* ***máyhen*** *min* ***iídi***
'Da hörte es Ruben und wollte ihn aus **ihren Händen** retten' (SAE VII 48.20–22)

(156) *wu-ʿá takán* ***men ʾedhéten*** *ʿeš*
‘**Unsere Hände** aber sollen sich an ihm nicht vergreifen’ (SAE VII 49.22–23)[71]

(157) *wu-ṭároh meš bé-ed*
‘Und sie packte ihn an der Hand’ (SAE VII 80.29–30)[72]

(158) *wu-lé* ***mes*** *be-****éd***
‘Er ergriff **ihre Hand**’ (Bittner 1918, 26.31)

(159) *wa-kón bug ʿayg di-****méš éed*** *ḳeŝóʿo*
‘Und es war dort ein Mann, **dessen Hand** vertrocknet war’ (Bittner 1918, 56.1)

(160) *ʿaf teḳóʿod* ***meš*** *le-****ídi*** *áʿẓoẓ tyó elhé*
‘...bis daß niedersteigen auf **seine beiden Hände** Kräfte wie diese’ (Bittner 1918, 120.2)

## 3.2. *Di*-marking (13 examples)

(161) *fkots* ***dse*** *be-****ídi*** *wu-néfḥot dse ʿain*
‘Sie rieb es in **ihren Händen**, hauchte ihr Auge an...’ (SAE VII 69.11–12)

(162) *yeʿámer sen* ***dihé*** *bé-****ʾed***
‘Er tut sie in **seine Hand**’ (SAE VI 195.11)

(163) *izáʿa ṭey* ***dihé*** *min* ***ʾed***
‘Er nimmt eines von **seiner Hand**’ (SAE VI 195.13)

(164) *ráḥaẓ* ***dihé ʾídi***
‘...er **seine Hände** gewascht hat’ (SAE VI 203.15)

(165) *wa-telóhom ḥóhi* ***dse*** *bé-****ʾed***
‘Sie berührt den Boden mit **ihrer Hand** und küßt ihre Hand mit dem Munde’ (SAE VI 226.15)

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[71] The editor adduces *di-ḥán* as a variant in brackets.

[72] *meš bé-ed* ‘in his hand’.

(166) *izégod* ***dihí ʾídi*** *wa-yúṭab* ***dihé*** *be-****ʾídi*** *dihé id bérki… wål iẓ̂áfẓ̂ef dihi be-ʿaíni*
‘…erhebt er **seine Hände** und schlägt mit **seinen Händen** auf seine Knie… zuckt nicht mit den Augen’ (SAE VI 290.17–21)

(167) *wa-ʿémor e ʿayg šábaḥ* ***diê*** *be-****éd***
‘Und er sagte zu dem Manne: Du streckest aus **deine Hand**!’ (Bittner 1918, 58.5)

(168) *tegódiḥen we-teʿáḳal* ***diê ed*** *ʿes*
‘Du kommst und legst **deine Hand** auf sie’ (Bittner 1918, 112.23)

(169) *ʿar ber yhe ʿéḳal* ***dihé ídi*** *le-gáʿiher ḥarírihen wutrefíhin*
‘…nur daß er legte **seine** beiden **Hände** auf wenige Krenke und sie gesund machte’ (Bittner 1918, 122.5)

(170) *tšefétaih dhê bi-ʾid*
‘Stich ihn in die Hand’ (SAE IV 70.7)[73]

Just three exceptional examples violate these rules—as against the 36 ‘correct’ ones—are in evidence.

(171) *wa-****dihó ʾídi*** *tenaṭáfo ímrher*
‘Und **meine Hände** troffen von Myrrhe’ (SAE VI 30.19)

(172) *ʿaf taʿḳír* ***dihó*** *be-****ʾídi***
‘…bis auf **meinen Händen** du groß werdest’ (SAE VI 205.20)

(173) *ḥaúweróti* ***dího ʾídi***
‘Schwarz sind **meine** beiden **Hände’** (SAE VI 238.3)

[73] *dhê bi-ʾid* ‘in his hand’.

Remarkably, no examples of 'incorrect' *men*-marking have been detected: in each case, it is rather *di*-marking that is unexpectedly used. This is compatible with the distribution obtained for *ʾéʾed* 'hand' on the evidence of CSOL I–II (15 'correct' examples versus two 'exceptions').

These statistics reflect the general picture. Indeed, the majority of the more than 700 tokens explored in the framework of the present investigation agree with the syntactic/referential rules outlined above. The total number of exceptions is 55, thus ca 8 percent of the whole number of the possessive tokens considered. Among these, very few pertain to unexpected *men*-marking in contexts where *di*-marking is predicted: only six reliable examples (one of them attested twice in a single story) of *men*-marking introducing the possessor coreferent with the subject of the clause have been detected in the entire Vienna corpus.

(174) *wa-ʿéṣom dihé ġáġa* ***moy*** *ke-****ṭádaḥ***
'Er band seinen Bruder an **seinen Rücken**' (SAE IV 88.21–22)

(175) *erḳóḥo ḥaúlhel* ***meš*** *min* ***éd***
'Sie zog den Siegelring von **ihrer Hand**' (SAE VII 30.10–11)

(176) ***mékin eḳonío*** *dihó min ḳáʿer tzéʿe*
'**Eure Speisen** sollt ihr aus meinem Hause holen' (SAE VI 88.3)

(177) *ʿažíti ḳaṭaníti… ḥarírehen máyhi be-gádi*
'zwei kleine, zarte Frauen' (SAE VI 211.5–6)[74]

[74] *máyhi be-gádi* 'in their bodies'.

(178) *kése ʿaig inʕ̣ef yhē idín wa-šḵel* ***moy idín***
'Der Jungling fand einen Mann, dessen Ohren ausgebreitet waren und der sich in **seine Ohren** hüllte' (SAE IV 102.13–15, see also 103.3–5)[75]

(179) *wa-lóṭ ṣett* ***meš*** *le-****ḥáylihil***
'Und hierauf blickte er auf in **seinem Umkreis**' (Bittner 1918, 72.34)

These six 'irregular' cases are probably to be supplemented with the following example, where the use of *men*-marking is also not quite canonical.

(180) *wu-elhé egehéten* ***mésin tídehe*** *ʿaṭobínsin le-kízeho*
'Und diese Weiber legen **ihre Brüste** auf die Schulter' (SAE VI 91.21)[76]

The majority of the 'exceptions' involve *di*-marking used instead of expected *men*-marking. Practically all the examples collected below involve core body part terms (in one case, example (193), a part of a tree).

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[75] *Di*-marking in the first part of the sentence is predictable insofar as the verb is interpreted as active: *ʾénʕ̣ef díʾyhe ʾidéni* 'he spread his (own) ears' (theoretically, Müller's *ʾénʕ̣ef* could also stand for the passive *ʾínʕ̣af*). *Di*-marking would also be expected in the second part, instead of the attested *men*-marking (*wa-šḵel mey ʾidéni* 'he wrapped himself with his ears'). Note that in the Abd al-Kuri version *di*-marking is employed throughout.

[76] The sentence is arranged as a chain of left-dislocated constituents: 'these women—their breasts—they put them upon their shoulders'. Accordingly, the possessive pronoun and its antecedent formally belong to different clauses (for similar examples of the *men*-marking with left-dislocated possessors see Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.5.2, with fn. 52).

The first subsection comprises the examples in which *the possessum is the subject of the clause*.

(181) *ḥaúweróti* ***dího ʿaíni***
'Schwarz sind **meine** (beiden) **Augen**' (SAE VI 198.15)

(182) *ho tébehor wa-****dihó tódii*** *tió kóti*
'Ich bin eine Mauer und **meine Brüste** Türmen gleich' (SAE VI 220.13)

(183) ***dihêt ʿaíni*** *taʿtíbero le-digdêge*
'**Deine Augen** [richte] auf das Feld' (SAE IV 50.9)

(184) ***dihé ʿázghel*** *ål teṭámaḥ*
'...ist **sein Membrum** impotent' (SAE VI 295.1)

(185) *ḥaúweróti* ***dího ʾídi***
'Schwarz sind **meine** beiden **Hände**' (SAE VI 238.3)

(186) *wa-****dihó ʾídi*** *tenaṭáfo ímrher wa-****ʾili-hó aṣábeḥ*** *ímrherináṭaf le-di wu-le-biš le-merád*
'Und **meine Hände** troffen von Myrrhe und **meiner Finger** Myrrhe floss auf die Griffe des Riegels' (SAE VI 30.19)[77]

(187) *ifól* ***dié díḳehon*** *líbehon wa-é iṭa*
'Warum ist **dein Bart** weiß und du so?' (SAE VII 26.13–14)

(188) *ber* ***dihó rey*** *míleʾ ẓáyrob wa-****dihó raʿt*** *min ségek d(y)a-ḥté*
'Denn **mein Haupt** ist voll Taus, **meine Locken** voll nächtlicher Feuchte' (SAE VI 30.10)

(189) *hóʾo* ***li-í ʾíṭ(y)ob***
'Wo sind **deine Euter**?' (SAE VI 103.27)

(190) *karámen égdaḥk ḥêkum suwá sellém* ***dhet reh***
'Wenn du ein gerechtes Urtheil sprichst, ist **dein Kopf** gerettet' (SAE IV 66.12–14)

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[77] As in the original biblical text, the second part is a noun phrase (lit. 'my fingers (are) the myrrh which is flowing').

(191) *ʿémor heh* ***dhet fêne***
'Da sprach er zu ihm: **Dein Angesicht**!' (SAE IV 100.21, 110.11)

(192) *náʿe ʾéhes ṣéḥlo* ***dihó*** *min* ***ʾéṣḥal*** *wa-té* ***dihó*** *min* ***té***
'Diese nun ist Gebein von **meinem Gebein** und Fleisch von **meinem Fleische**' (SAE VI 5.8–9)

(193) *riómeh* ***díse fótir*** *meṭáḳanoh be-kéfif*
'Langgestreckt ist **deren Ast**, süße Palme, die in Kefif' (SAE VI 299.16–17)

In the following examples, *di-* marks 'part–whole' (body part) possession in which *the possessum is not the subject of the clause* (and its possessor is not coreferent with the subject). Note especially the first two examples, where *di*-marking is employed in spite of the referential conflict (Kibrik 2001, 1129–30; 2011, 62–67; on the opposition of *di*-marking and *men*-marking as a means of avoiding referential conflicts see Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.5.2).

(194) *wa-gazz* ***dihé ʿásgel*** *wa-****karâʿil***
'Er schnitt ihm **seinen Penis** und seine **Testikel**' (SAE IV 127.11–12)

(195) *wa-ʿám iŝóniš íntef* ***dihé*** *le-****ŝérʿehan***
'Und als er ihn sah, fiel er auf **seine Füße** hin' (Bittner 1918, 110/22)

(196) *ʿan gírbog tit* ***di-ḗ ʿázgehel***
'…wenn die Katze **dein Glied** frißt' (SAE VII 70.14)

(197) *ʿaf taʿḳír* ***dihó*** *be-****ʾídi***
'…bis auf **meinen Händen** du groß werdest' (SAE VI 205.20)

(198) *wa elâḳaṭ subûl sêri de d-ekêse šéṭaifo* ***de-hê*** *be-****ʿaíni***
'...und Aehren lesen hinter dem her, vor **dessen Augen** ich Gefallen finden werde' (SAE IV 49.2)

(299) *wa-ʿémero ṭárb min ṭaírob nḥáta* ***dihé reh***
'...legte dann ein Holzstück unter **sein Haupt**' (SAE IV 82.10–11)

(200) *ifôd kísek šétaifo* ***dhêt*** *be-****ʿaínī***
'Wie habe ich Gnade gefunden vor **deinen Augen**?' (SAE IV 50.10)

(201) *láʿmeho ekôse šéṭaifo* ***dihêt*** *be-****ʿaíni***
'Möge ich Gnade finden vor **deinen Augen**' (SAE IV 51.13)

(202) *ål yeʾáraḥ ṭífer* ***dihó*** *di-****ŝab***
'Er kommt gleich dem Nagel **meines Fußes**' (SAE VII 21.8)

(203) *wa tekôšif la-ʾamt* ***dihé ŝâfi***
'Und deck ihn an **seinen Füssen** auf' (SAE IV 53.4, see also 54.7–8; 55.9–10)

(204) *dūʾe diho d-idfēf ílbib de ḫail insíyye*
'Das Heilmittel gegen meinen Seitenschmerz ist das Herz der menschlichen Stute' (SAE IV 76.8–10)[78]

(205) *wu-šʾófotš dse be-****ẓ́ánaḥ*** *wa-šoʾótoh dse míbrhe di-ṣáme* ***dihó*** *be-****ẓ́ánaḥ***
'Sie legte es an ihren Busen, ihr totes Kind aber legte sie an **meinen Busen**' (SAE VI 20.12)[79]

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[78] *dūʾe diho d-idfēf*, literally 'the cure of my sides'. The use of *di*-marking is perhaps motivated by the preceding *inémoš dūʾe dhet d-idfāf* 'Was ist das Heilmittel gegen deinen Seitenschmerz?' (SAE IV 76.6–7), where *di*-marking is accounted for by the possessor introduced at the beginning of the phrase (*inémoš* = *ʾiném heš*, literally 'What is for you?').

[79] *Di*-marking is predictable in the first clause ('she put [my child] on her lap'), but not in the second one ('she put her dead child on my lap').

(206) *wa-ʿémor heh állāh díbbeh wa-sedígtoh ṭhar yűnān ḳehór tken miloʿoh* ***dihé*** *le-****réy***
'Und es machte ihm Gott einen Kürbis, und er wuchs über Johna empor, damit er Schatten bilde über **seinem Haupte**' (SAE VI 28.3)

(207) *állāh d'isra'īl de gídaḥš ḳohôr tšakêri neḥáṭ* ***dihé gêhi***
'...dem Gotte Israels, unter **dessen Fittigen** du Zuflucht suchst' (SAE IV 51.12)

(208) *ŝoté'e le-rébd* ***dihín*** *di-****elbhebéten***
'Er war besorgt über die Bosheit **ihrer Herzen**' (Bittner 1918, 58.5)

(209) *igódiḥen dídehe méḥle wu-izáʿa méthal di-hináuwi* ***dihín*** *be-****élbhebéten***
'...kommt der Teufel rasch und nimmt den Spruch, das gesät wurde in **ihren Herzen**' (Bittner 1918, 82.15)

(210) *wa-kóbo dse dínob id-ḳéne* ***dihé*** *di-****náḥrīr***
'Und [die Maus] steckte ihren Schweif in das Innere **seiner Nase**' (SAE VI 50.16)

(211) *ē* ***dihó ṣáḥlo*** *wa-****dihó té***
'Du bist von **meinem Bein** und **meinem Fleisch**' (SAE VI 8.22–23)

(212) *ber yhe ʾégaḥ dihín díaḥ dihó le-fáne*
'Denn ihre Bosheit ist emporgestiegen vor mich!' (SAE VI 23.8–9)[80]

(213) *láḥmod ʿánki* ***dího ʿaíni***
'Ich liebe euch, ihr **meine Augen**' (SAE VI 259.19)

[80] *dihó le-fáne* 'at my face'.

(214) *éḳṣeṣ* ***di-ḗ*** *min* ***gad*** *déle di-ḥámoš derā́hem*
'...werde ich von **deinem Körper** abschneiden das Gewicht von fünf Dirhem' (SAE VII 74.16–18)

(215) *ḳehór inefériš* ***dihín*** *min* ***ʾedhéten***
'...um ihn aus **ihrer Hand** zu retten' (SAE VII 49.1)

(216) *bi-rā́ṭel min* ***dihét fáḫid***
'ein Pfund [Fleisch] **deines Schenkels**' (SAE IV 150.35–36)

(217) *erágeḥ rā́ṭel* ***dihét*** *min* ***fáḫid***
'So will ich ein Pfund aus **deinem Schenkel** nehmen' (SAE IV 151.17–18)

(218) *wa-****dihé*** *min* ***di-fḫid*** *tígziz rā́ṭel*
'Und schneide ein Pfund aus **seinem Schenkel**' (SAE IV 152.30–31; 153.5–6)

(219) *ū ŝéraḳo* ***dse reh*** *wa-šígaḥo šfê* ***dse*** *men* ***reh***
'Und sie kämmte **ihr Haupt** und es fielen Haare aus von **ihrem Haupte**' (SAE IV 84.2–4)[81]

(220) *wa-šírḳaḥ dur* ***dse*** *min* ***ʾíṣbeḥ***
'Und es wich das Blut von **ihrem Finger**' (SAE VI 107.22)

(221) *wu-zéʿe dihó míbrhe* ***dihó*** *min* ***ʾamt***
'[Sie] nahm mein Kind von **meiner Seite**' (SAE VI 20.10)

(222) *éhek eblég dihó melák diê min fáne*
'Ich möchte senden meinen Engel vor dir her' (Bittner 1918, 6.2)[82]

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[81] *Di*-marking is predictable in the first clause ('she washed her head'), but not in the second one ('hair fell from her head'), where it may have emerged via attraction.

[82] *Diê min fáne* 'at your face'.

(223) *wu-zéʿe ṭād min ilhé min* ***dihé***[83]*min* ***ʂ̂éylaḥ***
'Und er (Gott) nahm eine **seiner Rippen**' (SAE VI 5.5)

In the last ten examples, the appearance of *di-* instead of the expected *men* could be explained by the presence of the ablative *men* within the same collocation: **mek men fáne* 'from your face/presence' in the final example could have been considered tautological and, accordingly, replaced with *díʾɛ men fáne*. However, in the Vienna corpus there are plenty of examples in which possessive *men* is employed side by side with ablative *men* (such as *ménhi min íṣbeḥ* 'von meinem Finger' in SAE VI 107.12) so that this solution can scarcely be correct.

In the following cases *di*-marking appears side by side with more 'correct' *men*-marking.

(224) *wa-****dsé náḥrir*** *ríhom tió mezíngua wa-****més giréb*** *yeḥóre meš di-ḳáre dé méthal*
'**Ihre Nase** ist lang wie ein Getreidesack und **ihren Korb** möge jeder suchen, der diesen Vers liest' (SAE VI 316.24–25)[84]

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[83] The repetition *min ilhé min dihé* cannot be grammatical: presumably, the informant gave two alternative versions of the phrase, one with number concord of the possessive pronoun and one without. Such alternative readings are not uncommon on the pages of SAE VI, but usually one of the two variants is put in brackets by Müller.

[84] That *giréb* 'basket' receives here the *men*-marking is undoubtedly due to the fact that it is used as a euphemism for female genitalia—that is, treated as a body part.

(225) *ʿemor hês ʿek lšef* ***dehêt l'erbêbo*** *wa-šēf* ***môs l'erbêbo***
'Er sprach zu ihr: Ich möchte auf **deinem Schosse** schlafen, und er legte sich auf **ihren Schoss**' (SAE IV 82.6–8)

*Di*-marking is twice employed, in one short passage, with a noun attaching a pronominal suffix.

(226) ***di-ḗ*** *le-****rešk*** *ʾáḥzizk*
'Hast du **deinen Kopf** (verwirkt), ich schlage ihn ab' (SAE VII 29.3–4, see also SAE VII 29.5)

The use of *di*-marking here goes along the rules outlined above: it is superfluous as long as the pronominal suffix is the main marker of the pronominal possessor and can be freely omitted with no change of meaning. Note that "double" possessive marking involving *men* is actually attested in modern Soqotri (Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.6.2, ex. (180)).

## 4.0. Conclusions

The Vienna corpus provides rich material on possessive constructions in Soqotri. By and large, the available evidence does not significantly differ from what may be gleaned from CSOL I–II, but provides important additions and refinements to what has been described in our first study on this topic.

The most interesting features of the Vienna corpus absent from CSOL I–II can be summarised as follows.

- A handful of *men*-marked possessive pronouns in the domain of kinship possession are attested.
- Contexts in which *men*-marking prevails over *di*-marking include the 'place–inhabitant' relation.

- Reliable examples of *men*-marking introducing the argument (usually agent) or adjunct of a verbal noun are available.

These features can hardly be understood as reflecting an earlier stage of the development of the possession system. Rather, they are to be regarded as alternative paths of development, which were not pursued further by the dialect spoken by our language consultants. In the first place, this concerns the use of *men* for kinship possession, which has no continuation whatsoever in CSOL I–II.

Besides, the Vienna corpus shows a somewhat broader employment of the possessive suffixes than CSOL I–II: these are compatible with a wider scope of lexemes and occur in a greater number of syntactic contexts (see Bulakh and Kogan 2025, §3.6 for a comparative overview). In this case, we are clearly faced with gradual decay of the head-marking of pronominal possession.

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# CHRISTIAN PALESTINIAN ARAMAIC BETWEEN GREEK AND ARABIC

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Among the three Western Aramaic literary traditions of Late Antiquity, Christian Palestinian Aramaic is arguably the one least studied from a historical-linguistic point of view. And yet, it offers a number of insights into the language situation in Byzantine Palestine that cannot easily be gained from Jewish Palestinian and Samaritan Aramaic. A less well-known but significant point is the substrate evidence that, cumulatively, documents a certain presence of Arabic in the region already in pre-Islamic times. Such data ties in with both very recent work on the diversity and diffusion of Old Arabic varieties and ongoing interest in identifying the still under-researched factors that eventually led to the creation of another Christian Aramaic written language besides Greek and Syriac by the fifth century CE at the latest.

Excepting some thirty short inscriptions that date from the period between the fifth and the eleventh centuries CE and originate in an ecclesiastical milieu of monasteries and parishes,[1] the

[1] The treatment of the epigraphic material in the recent dictionary by Sokoloff (2014) is less reliable than the discussion of the vocabulary of the literary texts; Nebe (2016a; 2016b) makes a number of essential

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corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic exclusively consists of translations from Greek, which results in a substantial number of lexical borrowings. Its roots in a regional Aramaic vernacular, which was spoken until about the eighth or ninth century CE, are nonetheless evident (Gzella 2015, 317–26; Stadel f.c.). First, this variety, like its two Palestinian Aramaic sister languages, simultaneously exhibits a number of innovations common to members of the Western Aramaic branch—such as third-person feminine plural forms ending in *-ē* or *-ī*, agent nouns according to the pattern /qāṭōl/ acting as by-forms of the inherited basic-stem active participle /qāṭel/, and derived-stem infinitives with an /m-/ prefix—as well as a few instances of local micro-variation—in particular, the shift of *o* and *e* in the vicinity of a preceding *i* vowel to *u* and *i*, respectively. Many lexical isoglosses of the Western dialects that still occur in Western Neo-Aramaic are also attested here.[2] Judging from the find-spots of the material, the dialect that underlies Christian Palestinian Aramaic originated in Transjordan, near Amman, and spread to the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Second, the syntax of the translated texts is highly idiomatic in character, especially as far as the rendering of verbal forms is concerned, despite the many differences in the marking

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corrections. An overview of this subcorpus can be found in Hoyland (2010, 37–39).

[2] E.g., the by-form *ʾnh* ‘we’ instead of *ʾnn*; the passive participle of the root *yhb* ‘give’ with the sense ‘be, exist’; the noun **kotl* ‘wall’; the by-form of the root *zbr* ‘prune’ instead of *zmr*; the allomorphic root *ḥmī* ‘see’ instead of common Aramaic *ḥzī*; the roots *ḥsl* ‘end’, *nqī* ‘pick, choose’, and *qṣr* ‘be short’; and the noun **ṣadaqā* in the sense ‘alms’.

of tense, aspect, and modality in Aramaic as opposed to Greek. The use of periphrastic conjugations consisting of a finite form of the verb 'be' and an active participle of the main verb in order to render ongoing or repeated events in the past or future is a case in point (Li 2013, based on an analysis of the Gospels).

And third, various passing remarks by Greek and Latin writers on aspects of daily life among Palestinian Christians make it clear that, at least outside urban centres, Aramaic served as the normal means of ordinary communication. Such words include, among others, *gubba* 'cistern' in Jerome's (347–420) *Vita Pauli* (Migne PL 23, 22), a word directly attested in Christian Palestinian Aramaic as well (Sokoloff 2014, 69); *barech* 'Bless!' in the same author's *Vita Hilarionis* (Migne PL 23, 42; the Greek and Old Church Slavonic translations even have the longer reading βάρεχ, μαρί and парехъ мари 'Bless, oh Lord!', respectively, which, in light of the preservation of word-final *-ī*, exhibits a characteristically Western-Aramaic form), which supplements other forms of the same root that occur in the corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic with the imperative (Sokoloff 2014, 63);[3] and a few stray lexemes in Epiphanius of Salamis, especially νουρα 'fire'

[3] A more detailed discussion of these textual variants and their implications can be found in Gippius et al. (2020, 6–10), but the meaning becomes clear from the gloss *id est, benedic* in the Latin text. Note that the manuscript evidence for the reading in the Old Church Slavonic translation of Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis* varies between парехъ мара (with an erroneous final *-a* in мара, apparently under the influence of the vowel in the preceding syllable), пархъ марїи, and пархъ марии, but the expected spelling мари appears in a citation of the same expression on the walls of the St Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod.

(Sokoloff 2014, 260) and presumably ϰοδδα ‘jar’ (from **kadd*), both in the emphatic state (Dummer 1968). Systematic scrutiny of the *Nebenüberlieferung* of Palestinian Aramaic in Greek and Latin ecclesiastical writers, which has been unduly neglected by lexicographers of Christian Palestinian Aramaic (such transcriptions feature in neither Schultheß 1903 nor Sokoloff 2014), will, in all likelihood, uncover more non-onomastic evidence.

There are also several passages that report the use of spoken Aramaic without citing actual words or phrases in transcription. In another section of the *Vita Hilarionis*, Jerome comments on the native pronunciation of Aramaic words in the mouth of a traveller who knew only Franconian and Latin, but, thanks to demon possession, was capable of flawless pronunciation of the typical fricative and guttural sounds of Aramaic as well as idiomatic expressions (Migne PL 23, 41). Jerome’s contemporary Egeria, a late-fourth-century pilgrim to the Holy Land from Gaul or Northern Spain, notes in her Latin itinerary that portions of the population spoke Greek, Aramaic, and both. For this reason, speeches given by the bishop—who, she adds, knew but avoided active use of Aramaic—and liturgical readings were translated on the spot from Greek into Aramaic (47, 3–4; the Latin text and an annotated German translation are easily accessible in Röwekamp 1995, 302–3). The latter furnishes precious indirect evidence of the existence of fully bilingual Greek-Aramaic dragomans in Byzantine Palestine.

Latin writers commonly used terms like *sermone Syro*, *voce Syra* or, *siriste* literally ‘in Syriac’, for Aramaic, but this is simply a convention of nomenclature (as Dummer 1968, 398–99, has

shown for Jerome) and does not imply any underlying classification of Aramaic into distinct varieties. Jerome, Egeria, and others certainly all meant the Palestinian vernacular and not literary Syriac, which was hardly spoken in Palestine anyway. The same usage recurred when earlier scholarship employed labels such as 'Modern Syriac' for Neo-Aramaic languages, or 'Palestinian Syriac' for Christian Palestinian Aramaic, respectively.[4] Conversely, Jews and Christians in the Byzantine period tended to avoid the umbrella term 'Aramaic', which would cover both Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic, no doubt because it had by then assumed the meaning 'pagan' alongside the older linguistic sense.[5] Another possible designation for Aramaic in Antiquity, 'Chaldaean', was probably deemed unsuitable for similar reasons, though Jerome employed it a few times in parallelism and, as it appears, synonymously with 'Syriac' for the Aramaic parts of the book of Daniel (*In Danielem* 2.7; 4.10; 7.47). For 'Chaldaean' by and large referred, often in a derogatory way, to soothsayers and

[4] It was Nöldeke (1868) who felicitously coined the term 'Christian Palestinian Aramaic', but his use of 'Neusyrisch' for the written form of Urmia Neo-Aramaic was less than ideal (*sit venia verbo*, for many years ago, Geoffrey Khan shared with the present writer a memory of his own teacher Edward Ullendorff, who did not suffer lightly student disagreement with Nöldeke in class!).

[5] The nuance 'pagan' for 'Aramaic' is well-attested in Christian Palestinian, too (the references are listed in Sokoloff 2014, 29), where it also serves as a rendering of Greek Ἕλλην with the same connotation.

diviners in Classical Latin (its older, geographical, meaning, referring to inhabitants of Babylonia also remained in use, but crops up much more rarely).[6]

While one, therefore, cannot reasonably doubt that a significant proportion of ordinary Palestinian Christians normally spoke a regional variety of Aramaic in their daily lives throughout the Byzantine period, it is more difficult to say why exactly it was eventually promoted to a written code with a script and a set of spelling conventions of its own. Roman imperial orthodoxy in Palestine employed Greek as the official ecclesiastical language, and Syriac, which had already developed a rich written tradition by that time, was available if Aramaic was preferred. The dialect on which Syriac is based belongs to a branch different from that of Palestinian Aramaic, to be sure, but, given Syriac's wide coverage across the Syrian and Mesopotamian speech area, it would presumably not have been incomprehensible to speakers of the Western varieties either.[7] Since the Christian Palestinian script had been modelled on the Syriac letterforms, the monastic environment in the eastern Jordan area, where Christian Palestinian Aramaic arose, obviously could have had access to the West-Syriac writing tradition had they so desired.

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[6] Pease (1977, 43–4) has a survey of the relevant attestations of the term *Chaldaei* in Latin with a few concise remarks on the history of its use.

[7] According to an anecdotal story in Flavius Josephus's *Bellum Iudaicum* (IV:1.5), Roman legionaries recruited from Syria, who in all likelihood spoke an Eastern Aramaic dialect closely related to the Edessan one on which Syriac is based, could understand the table talk of Palestinian Jews conducted in their Western Aramaic vernacular.

The motivation for the decision to create a proper written form may lie in the more modest purposes for which Christian Palestinian Aramaic was employed. Presumably, it was not intended to serve as a means of an overarching ecclesiastical infrastructure of advanced theological literature, but to cater for the needs of parishioners whose communal lives would revolve around the churches and monasteries in the immediate vicinity of their homes. This would also have been the background from which the monks and members of the local clergy came. Hence the decisively down-to-earth character of the texts and the lack of a rigorous top-down standardisation. The epigraphic material consists of short building, memorial, and funerary inscriptions, in addition to a concise papyrus letter, whereas the manuscripts contain biblical, liturgical, catechetical, and hagiographic material of a generally unassuming kind, but by and large no sophisticated exegetical or philosophical treatises.

In addition, the largely phonetic spelling conventions (with the exception of ʾ as a regular means of indicating final *-ā* in the emphatic state, just as in Syriac) represent a complete break from the earlier Achaemenid chancellery language. They show that Christian Palestinian Aramaic did not evolve in a learned milieu, and no direct connection with any prior writing tradition of Aramaic in the region can be established.[8] Quite the contrary is the

[8] Beyer (1984, 50, 406) considered the language of a very short pagan dedicatory inscription from 7/6 BCE found at Elmal, half-way between the Sea of Galilee and Damascus, a witness to the ancestor dialect of Christian Palestinian Aramaic. While this is theoretically possible in

case for Syriac, which originated in circles of Edessan administrators and evolved in an unbroken developmental chain into a Christian literary language, presumably following the conversion of chancellery scribes. The large number of religious and administrative terms that Christian Palestinian Aramaic borrowed from Greek, or from Latin via Greek,[9] underscores not only the latter's prominence as the official ecclesiastical language in Roman Palestine, but also points to the lack of a native terminological apparatus in this particular Aramaic variety.[10] Rather, it was presumably geared towards transmitting basic knowledge of the orthodox Christian faith and religious practice to a predominantly rural Aramaic-speaking public with little or no access to ecclesiastical high culture.

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terms of linguistic geography, the text itself does not exhibit any trait that might prove (or, indeed, disprove) such an affiliation.

[9] Latin loanwords in Christian Palestinian Aramaic mostly pertain to the domain of Roman provincial administration and the army, such as *speculator* (Sokoloff 2014, 23), *scutum* (23), *sudarium* (282), *signum* (285), *sicarius* (286), *strata* (292), *patricius* (327), *palatium* (332), *praetorium* (332), *fascia* (336), *piscina* (336), *flagellum* (339), *quadrans* (364), *caesar* (372), *census* (372), *cella* (374), *calamus* (375), *Kalendae* (375), *centurio* (377), *custodia* (378), *castra* (378–79), and *cassida* (379). To these add now *ptrt'* 'bowl', from Latin *patera*, attested in a fragment of the *Dormitio Mariae* not yet known to Sokoloff (CP3 fol. 4 verso, col. a, ln. 8, in Müller-Kessler 2018).

[10] For another Greek loan not yet included in Sokoloff (2014), see *ʾgps*, in all likelihood an accusative plural ἀγάπη 'agape meals' in a new fragment of the *Dormitio Mariae* (Müller-Kessler 2018, 86, who translates imprecisely with 'memorials').

This is not to say that ordinary Greek words do not surface in Christian Palestinian Aramaic, but they do not indicate a high degree of general bilingualism. The noun *nysws* 'island' (Sokoloff 2014, 264) from *νῆσος*, for instance, may reflect the characteristically Greek interest in seafaring. Such a connection appears all the more plausible when one considers that the substantivised adjective *nysny* 'islander' explicitly refers to Greeks in 'the Syrian from the East will waste away the island-dwellers from the West' (Isa. 9.11), as becomes clear from the wording in the Septuagint that underlies this rendering.[11]

Conversely, the borrowings of many Greek function words, such as ʾ from *ἤ* 'or', *gr* from *γάρ* 'but, indeed', *qygr* from *καὶ γάρ* 'for indeed', and several others seem, at first glance, to relate to spontaneous use rather than technical terminology. Upon closer examination of their distributional pattern, however, it emerges that they, too, may have entered the language via written Bible translations, because it is there that they occur particularly frequently, in contradistinction to their noteworthy absence from the inscriptions. The straightforward diction of the latter no doubt more faithfully reproduces the Aramaic dialect on which Christian Palestinian is based, so one may seriously question whether people actually used these originally Greek particles in their ordinary and spontaneous speech. Instead, the language of

[11] Sokoloff's scepticism (2014, 202) as to the etymology of *nysny* seems unwarranted given the incontestable attestation of the loan *nysws* 'island' and the general productivity of the substantivising affix *-ān*. The preposition *l-* would then mark the direct object (see Sokoloff 2014, 190, entry *l-*, item 2, for parallels).

the inscriptions seems to reflect a register different from that of the literary texts in translation. A description of the epigraphic corpus in its own right would thus be of value.

Hence, borrowings of this kind do not by themselves prove widespread active use of Greek among the Christian inhabitants of the countryside east of the river Jordan. Moreover, widespread full bilingualism would have rendered the creation of an Aramaic written language for that particular target group otiose, because everybody would have known Greek anyway. Yet the swift erosion of Greek in Palestine during the decades following the adoption of Arabic as the state language around 700 CE suggests that the idiom of urban and ecclesiastical elites had not struck deep roots in the rural parts of the region. By contrast, the use of Aramaic as a language of liturgy and religious literature continued among Jews, Christians, and Samaritans for hundreds of years after Arabic had become the dominant vernacular, by about the mid-tenth century CE.

It has been pointed out that general similarity in linguistic structure, basic vocabulary, and means of word-formation between Aramaic and Arabic, but unlike Greek, facilitated a considerably high degree of functional bilingualism and, eventually, a smooth transition from the one to the other (Hoyland 2004, 194–98). On grounds of the same similarity, Syriac translations of Greek philosophical and scientific treatises presumably played such an important role as intermediaries in transmitting these works to the emerging Muslim elites. Around 800 CE, for instance, the Eastern-Syriac Patriarch Timothy I pointed out in a Syriac letter on the production of an Arabic version of Aristotle's

*Topics* that a translation based on the Syriac was more satisfactory than earlier ventures based directly on the Greek. The latter were considered *brbryn* 'barbaric', presumably due to excessively literal and unidiomatic style (see Heimgartner 2012, 65–6, for the Syriac text and Brock 1999 for an annotated English translation).

However, Palestinian Christians seem to have switched to Arabic as the dominant language somewhat earlier and more rapidly than Jews and Samaritans. The manuscript transmission of Christian Palestinian Aramaic continued until the thirteenth century, it is true, but the amount of linguistic contamination in witnesses dating from this later period clearly shows that knowledge of Aramaic rapidly declined after the eighth century. Even so, a comparison of the reactions of Christians, Jews, and Samaritans to Arabic's advance has not yet been the focus of scholarly attention, owing to the conventional association of Arabic with Islam. Such an association is nonetheless misleading for the period immediately preceding the advent of Islam, because the three sixth-century inscriptions from Syria that are clearly identifiable as Arabic in terms of script and language were all produced in a Christian context (Mascitelli 2006, 176–87). The one from Zabad near Aleppo, dated to the year 512 CE, also contains more extensive parallel versions in Greek and in Syriac (ibid., 176–78), and the one from Harran, dated to the year 568 CE (ibid., 183–87), has a facing Greek text. They show that Arabic was on its way to becoming a written language besides Greek, though with a lower status, among Arabic-speaking Christians.

Against the background of important recent work on the prominence of early forms of Arabic in pre-Islamic Syria-Palestine, one may suppose that Christians in the eastern Jordan area, too, comprised a certain number of people who regularly spoke Arabic as a first or second language, even though it did not evolve into a written code there. In such a situation, regular instances of Arabic substrate pronunciation in Aramaic provide some clues as to the pragmatically dominant language of the writer. The most conspicuous of them is the rendering of original Semitic */p/ as [b], which, as is widely accepted, presumably results from approximation. Since */p/ had shifted to [f] in Arabic by that time, it would have been unfamiliar to speakers accustomed to conversing in Arabic, so they tried to reproduce it with the closest equivalent in the phonetic repertoire of their language. Several examples from literary texts concern Greek loanwords, such as *ʾbṣlmwṣ* 'Psalm' (Sokoloff 2014, 3), *bṭryrk* 'patriarch' (45), *brwṭy* 'at first' and *brwpyṭyʾ* 'prophecy' (62), *dʾsbwṭys* 'master' (79), *ṭbzywn* 'topaz' (144), *mṭrʾbwlyṭʾ* 'metropolitan' (219), or *rbydwn* 'fan' (389), similarly βᾶσιν instead of πᾶσιν 'all' in Greek lamp inscriptions (Gzella 2015, 325).

While these tend to occur in late manuscripts that were composed in a period after the shift from Aramaic to Arabic had long taken place throughout Syria-Palestine and Mesopotamia, the word *ʾwb* for Aramaic *ʾap* 'even' in a ninth–eleventh-century tomb inscription from Gerasa near Amman exhibits the same phenomenon (Beyer 1984, 403, with additional notes on the date in Müller-Kessler 1991, 14). The use of the 'perfect of wish' *nʾḥt* 'may rest (sc. the soul of)' in the same inscription is another clear

Arabism, because a deontic-modal function of the perfect is alien to Aramaic (excepting Nabataean, which had undergone similar Arabic influence), but very normal in Arabic (Gzella 2015, 325).

At least one additional Arabic loan, possibly two, can be found in a papyrus letter from Mird, written by a frightened hermit to his abbot in the eighth century: *ʾhl* 'people' and perhaps *rʿš* 'to tremble' (Beyer 1984, 403–4).[12] Both lexemes belong to the basic vocabulary, and the emotional tone of voice suggests that the writer was in a stressful situation, in which the dominant language for spontaneous communication normally comes to the fore, especially since the style of the letter does not bear the mark of a highly educated author. One may take this as evidence that Arabic was well-established as an ordinary language among Palestinian Christians as early as the eighth century CE. The incorrect use of the emphatic and the absolute state in Aramaic in a building inscription from 1058 CE shows that language attrition had progressed considerably since then (Beyer 1984, 402).

The Arabic component in the lexicon of Christian Palestinian Aramaic is actually more extensive than the incomplete etymological information in dictionaries suggests.[13] The entry on the verb *bdl*, for instance (Sokoloff 2014, 40), specifies neither the origin nor the meaning of the word in its sole attestation in Mt. 4.3 and refers only to Schultheß's (1903, 22) old conjecture

[12] There is some discussion about the reading of the second word; see Müller-Kessler (1991, 15). It is also omitted from Sokoloff (2014).

[13] For explicit references to Arabic words, see Sokoloff (2014, 6, 258, and 320) on *ʾhl* 'crowd, people' (without a translation gloss), *nḥš* 'pierce', and *ʿrbs* 'be troubled'.

*ytʿbdwn* ‘that they (i.e., the stones) should be made (sc. to bread)’ corresponding to γένωνται in the Greek original. However, such a change is unnecessary, because, as already Schwally had realised (1893, 9–10), *bdl* corresponds to Arabic *badala* ‘change, exchange’, presumably in the factitive stem (compare Wehr and Kropfitsch 2020, 52). In addition, the attestation comes from Codex A of the Christian Palestinian Gospels, now in the Vatican Library, that is, a manuscript dating to the late period of the eleventh–thirteenth centuries, where Arabisms abound anyway.

A comparably simple explanation can be applied to the verb *yqn*, which, following a proposal by Müller-Kessler (1991, 212), has been argued to derive from Greek εἰκών ‘image’ (Sokoloff 2014, 166). This is most implausible on both phonological and semantic grounds, however. First of all, the spelling of, e.g., *ʾyqy* for εἰκῇ ‘in vain’ suggests that a verb derived from εἰκών would rather appear with an initial *ʾ-*. Moreover, the semantic development remains completely obscure. The occurrence of the factitive stem in the story of Eulogios the Stonecutter curiously lacks a translation gloss in the dictionary, but it seems to mean ‘make sure’ in the context in which it occurs, as indeed the most recent edition of the text suggests (Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff 1996, 86, 119, where the same unconvincing derivation is given).

However, the correct etymology can already be found in the *editio princeps* (Smith Lewis 1912, 35): *yqn* was not borrowed from Greek, but from Arabic *yaqina* ‘be certain’ (see also Wehr and Kropfitsch 2020, 1038), hence the factitive stem means

'make certain'.[14] As one expects, the corresponding Št-reflexive causative stem is used with the sense 'be fully convinced' in Rom. 4.21 for Greek πληροφορηθείς, literally 'be full of confidence'. The manuscripts in which both attestations occur predate the eleventh century; indeed, the one in Rom. 4.21 is from the Aramaic underwriting of the *Codex Climaci Rescriptus* and thus dates from some point in the period between the fifth and seventh centuries, which would make this verb an early loan.

These two etymologies were established hundred or more years ago and have been unduly neglected in recent scholarship. To these can be added new suggestions, among which those gleaned from textual witnesses that belong to the early period, between the fifth and eighth centuries, are especially relevant for tracing pre-Islamic Arabic influence. For this was the time when the vernacular underlying Christian Palestinian Aramaic was still actively spoken, whereas later manuscripts contain many instances of secondary contamination.

The origin of *gryn* 'chattering', corresponding to Greek ἀδολεσχία, is as yet unexplained (its etymology is unclear according to Sokoloff 2014, 76, and had already eluded Duensing 1906, 157, who remarked: "Unklar, wie zu verstehen oder zu ändern"). However, a connection with Arabic *ǧarā* 'flow, run out' gains

[14] Unfortunately, the Greek original has an entirely different wording (ἀπενύσταξα 'I dozed off') and is of little help here (see Clugnet 1901, 35 line 1; Dahlman 2007, 158 ln. 145). It is unclear where the reference to an allegedly underlying Greek ἐγνώρισα in Smith Lewis's glossary (1912, 35) comes from.

credibility from the use of the same verb for ‘lament, talk nonsense’ in Western Neo-Aramaic, which belongs to the same dialect branch as Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and in the Arabic vernaculars of Syria (Arnold 2019, 300). One of the two possible occurrences, 1 Sam. 1.16, even stems from a manuscript apparently dating to the early period (at least, this is how it is classified in Sokoloff 2014, xxvii), so the underlying verb *grī* may be an Arabic loan of considerably antiquity in Western Aramaic.[15] This is just one example for the light which a study of Western Neo-Aramaic can shed on Christian Palestinian Aramaic.

Finally, the curious expression *bkwl ḥšbʾ*, literally ‘with the whole mind’, as an equivalent for ἀσέμνως ‘gladly’ in Acts 21.17 is by no means “unclear” (according to Sokoloff 2014, 141), if one takes into consideration that the Arabic cognate *ḥasaba* can be used with the meaning ‘be content’, and the corresponding noun *ḥasb* for ‘contentment’ (Wehr and Kropfitsch 2020, 190). A Nabataean contract from the Dead Sea, where, as is well known, Arabisms occur frequently, contains an instance where *ḥšb* means ‘recognise, accept’ (P. Yadin 36, 3.24, see Beyer 2004, 244–47, 402). From there, it is but a small step to the nuance ‘heartfelt

[15] The other possible attestation in Ps. 54.3 occurs in a manuscript written at the end of the twelfth century. The reading *bgrʾmy* ‘in my bones’ is palaeographically certain, but presumably corrupt, and can hardly be derived from the wording ἀδολεσχίᾳ μου of the Greek *Vorlage* (see the note by Black 1954, 18, on the difficulty). An emendation into *bgry* in the light of 1 Sam. 1.16 is an easy remedy, as Goshen-Gottstein and Shirun (2008, 18, in the corresponding note in the apparatus) and, subsequently, Sokoloff (2014, 76) plausibly suggest.

welcome' in Acts 21.17, so it turns out that the Greek and the Christian Palestinian Aramaic texts do not differ much in the end.

The root *ḥšb* obviously belongs to the basic vocabulary of Aramaic, but this particular sense, which seems otherwise unattested in pre-modern Aramaic and has hitherto puzzled editors and lexicographers, may well have been influenced by the use of its cognate in Arabic; at least, this is what the distribution of the relevant occurrences suggests. Once again, the attestation in Acts comes from the *Codex Climaci Rescriptus* and thus from a manuscript that can confidently be dated to the earliest attested period of Christian Palestinian Aramaic.

Onomastic evidence does not have the same diagnostic weight for determining the vernacular in a particular region, but as far as Christian Palestinian Aramaic is concerned, it does further corroborate the various instances of contact-induced phonological, syntactic, and lexical influence that point to the presence of Arabic speakers among Palestinian Christians already in the pre-Islamic period. Several typically Arabian names on tombstones from es-Samra near Amman occur as early as the sixth century CE. For instance, *ʿwmyrw*, *qymw*, and *šlymw* (Beyer 1984, 404) all contain a reflex of the nominative ending *-u*. This ending belongs to the most distinctive hallmarks of Arabian personal names (it also appears in all names in the Arabic version of the Zabad inscription from 512 CE) and, in the case of the most popular one, ʿAmr (*ʿmrw*), even survives into Classical Arabic spelling practice (Spitaler 1979).

The combination of Arabic influence already in early Christian Palestinian Aramaic texts, on the one hand, and the presence

of characteristically Arabian names in the speech area of this particular Aramaic dialect, on the other, permits further insights into the linguistic setting in which this literary idiom evolved. More precisely, the cumulative evidence strongly suggests that Arabic gained some currency among Christians in the region between Jerusalem and further to the east as far as Amman in the pre-Islamic period, possibly even to a greater extent than Greek. This is also the kind of scenario where instances of structural convergence between languages in contact arise, for instance, as Stadel (2022) has argued convincingly, the loss of the infinitive in Christian Palestinian Aramaic and its replacement by the imperfect on analogy with Arabic. Comparable phenomena are unattested in contemporaneous Jewish Palestinian or Samaritan Aramaic material. This seems to reflect the overarching demographic situation. Since the majority of the Palestinian population between the fifth century and the early Islamic period were Christians, it is only to be expected that this group included the most sizeable segment of Arabic speakers.

In addition, the distributional pattern of Old Arabic inscriptions outside Arabia (a summary of the evidence can be found in Al-Jallad 2018, 322–24) supports the hypothesis of a significantly more prominent presence of Arabic varieties in Transjordan than elsewhere in Palestine. For want of a common supraregional writing tradition before the latter part of the fifth century, they were composed in several different scripts. Speakers of Arabic in this area, too, would have been adequately serviced by an Aramaic literary language, because it was linguistically closer to their vernacular than Greek. The wish to cater also for their

needs may have been another consideration involved in the decision to create a written standard for Christian Palestinian Aramaic besides Greek as the official ecclesiastical language.

As a result of the early presence of Arabic, the shift from Aramaic to Arabic appears to have been completed earlier, perhaps by about a century, among Christians in the eastern Jordan area than among Jews, Samaritans, and Christians in other parts of Palestine. Individual Arabic lexemes or syntactic features thus cannot serve as a reliable criterion for dating Christian Palestinian Aramaic texts, because not all of them necessarily result from secondary contamination. Their frequency nonetheless increases over time, so it is concentration rather than sheer presence that offers some guidance for diachronic analyses.

More importantly, they bring to the fore the extent to which Arabic was part of the linguistic fabric of Byzantine Palestine. Interactions between Aramaic and Arabic in pre-Islamic times are fertile ground for future research, but anyone who wishes to embark on such work would be well-advised to learn from the philological precision, sound judgment, and clarity of exposition that Geoffrey Khan himself so admirably applies in his many precious contributions to these and other languages in the medieval and modern periods!

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# ARAMAIC: LINGUA FRANCA, KOINE, OR BOTH?

*John Healey*

Geoffrey Khan has made a remarkable contribution to Semitic linguistics and will, no doubt, continue to do so for many years beyond his 65th birthday. Perhaps his most lasting contribution to Aramaic studies is his shifting of the agenda from Aramaic as an object of philological study, mostly concerned with the history of and changes in Aramaic over the three millennia of its attestation, to Aramaic in its modern manifestations as an object of linguistic analysis. Geoffrey is also a master of the *longue durée* of Aramaic and what follows is a stumbling attempt to keep up!

The distinctive contribution of Aramaic to linguistics arises from the fact that it is attested over such a long span of time and large breadth of geography. Although there can be no doubt that Aramaic in some form was in use in the second millennium BCE, it can be specifically documented from the ninth century BCE in an already mature literary form—though preserved on stone monuments: the Tell Fekheriyeh inscription (Abou-Assaf, Bordreuil, and Millard 1982) and Tel Dan inscriptions (Biran and Naveh 1993; 1995). At the other end of the timespan, Aramaic is, of course, still in use as a spoken language in Christian villages in northern Mesopotamia, to the study of which Geoffrey Khan

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has made a distinguished contribution, and in a small area of Syria. In its longevity its only rivals in Europe and the Mediterranean are Greek and Hebrew.

Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic (along with Latin and Arabic) have another linguistic 'life' apart from vernacular usage, since they are religious languages preserved and used also in believing communities. Their religious importance is related to their use in the transmission of scriptures, as well as their employment for liturgy and prayer. In both aspects there is inevitable conservatism and archaism, which keeps alive forms of the language which are different from the vernacular in those places where a form of the same language is spoken. Religious tradition has, however, the peculiarity that many users of the language are not native speakers of it, just as Latin was widely used in every Latin-rite Catholic church in the world until the 1960s. In the case of Arabic, it is quite normal in cities like Manchester for Muslim children to learn to recite the Quran in 'Classical' Arabic, while speaking English (and, to some extent, Urdu in a domestic context) as a vernacular.

This situation creates *diglossia* even among those whose vernacular is a form of Aramaic: Christians in northern Mesopotamia use Neo-Aramaic in the village streets, but Classical Syriac in the village church. One of the great unknowns in Syriac is the tracing of this bifurcation historically. We might assume that at some point in history the difference between the literary and vernacular forms of the language was less stark or even that at one

stage there was no difference. Unfortunately, there is little surviving evidence for non-religious, non-literary use of Syriac in the first millennium CE (see below).

Like Latin and Arabic (and, in modern times, English), Aramaic was often written in places where, so far as we can judge, it was not spoken (or spoken only in rarefied artificial environments, such as religious institutions). This Aramaic colonisation of non-Aramaic-speaking and ethnically diverse areas reflects Aramaic's emergence in certain limited periods as an international language, used for commerce, law, imperial administration, religion, and literature. In this context, it is often called a lingua franca (see below on this nomenclature). The three main episodes of this widespread use of Aramaic were:

1. Aramaic in the service of the Achaemenid Persian Empire;
2. Aramaic as the most important linguistic medium shared by the Middle Eastern Jewish communities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages (later displaced by Arabic);
3. the Syriac dialect of Aramaic, used as the common language of the Middle Eastern Christians from Late Antiquity and with a continuing role even today.

Although there are shared features in all three, there are also particularities of circumstance which set them apart from each other. In the case of Aramaic in the service of the Achaemenids, what was created was a communicative koine, used internationally for diplomacy, administration, commerce, and, to some extent, literature. In the case of Jewish Aramaic, what emerged was an ethnic, religious, academic, and literary koine,

restricted in its particular features to the Jewish community. In the third case, that of Syriac, we have a religious and academic koine which was used, like Latin in medieval Europe and Arabic in the Islamic World, irrespective of ethnic boundaries, by Christian communities which spoke a variety of languages (some speaking local Aramaic dialects different from Syriac, some speaking related Semitic languages, like Arabic, some speaking totally unrelated languages, like Farsi and Malayalam).

## 1.0. Aramaic: Koine and Lingua Franca

All three of these episodes of international Aramaic have features of communicative koines and some aspects which have often attracted the label 'lingua franca'. However, the labels koine and lingua franca refer to very different phenomena, despite the functional overlap between the two categories (see Bloomfield 1935, 468–75; Calvet 1981; Thomason 2001, 269; Matras 2009, 275–88).

Lingua franca is a term which is used rather freely even in the linguistics literature. Thomason (2001, 269), for example (and with justification), gives two completely different definitions of lingua franca in her glossary. On the one hand, it is "a language that is used for communication between groups who do not speak each other's languages." On the other, it refers also to an Italian-based pidgin (i.e., a *mixed* language which is not the native language of any individual community).

A lingua franca in this second, narrower sense is an idiom developed by speakers of different, often unrelated, languages for specific purposes, usually connected with trade. Such a lingua

franca may be dominated by the language of the controllers of that trade: it is thus a kind of minimalistic compromise between acceptance of the controllers' language and the native languages of the other groups. Such a lingua franca typically has its own forms, which are never combined in the everyday *native* language of any of the individuals who use the lingua franca.

A stabilised lingua franca of this kind is similar to a pidgin, an *ad hoc* combination of elements from different linguistic traditions, designed to ease communication for specific purposes. Where such a mixed language *does* become a native language (the main language spoken by a population group), it is called a creole, i.e., a formalised language passed on as the native tongue of a second generation.

The 'parade-ground' example of a lingua franca, the original *lingua franca* in the narrow sense, which gave its name to the phenomenon, is the shared language among Eastern Mediterranean seafarers and traders in the early modern period (Bloomfield 1935, 473; Calvet 1981, 22–23; Thomason 2001, 269; see also Wansbrough 1996). This lingua franca, Romance-based and Romance in most of its lexicon, was developed for a limited sphere of usage and became stabilised, but it was never used as anyone's main language. It was written down to some limited extent, but it was never used outside its immediate commercial sphere. In French, the term 'langues véhiculaires', used for linguae francae (see Calvet 1981), represents their character well: these are languages of conveying, a support for trade and general practical intercourse. Linguae francae of this kind are *simplified*

languages, developing special vocabulary related to the technical fields they are concerned with.

A koine, by contrast, is a particular register or variety of a *specific* language which is turned into a communal idiom by a linguistic community, transcending dialect boundaries. The whole of this wider community speaks, or originally spoke, some form of the specific language as its native tongue. The term *koinē* is, of course, Greek, and in that context refers to a special type of Greek which was developed by the speakers of a large number of divergent Greek dialects as a linguistic medium which bound them all together as Greeks (Horrocks 2010², 79–123, etc.). *Koinē* Greek is sometimes called 'the *koinē* dialect', but is a transdialectal *standardised version* of Greek (see Davies 1987 and, on dialect, Chambers and Trudgill 1998², 3–12).

Koines share with linguae francae the characteristic of being used for communication over a wide area, but they are based entirely on the natural resources of the linguistic community from which they derive. The motivation for the emergence of such a koine may, again, originally have been commercial, but other shared cultural institutions, such as those of religion and law, would also benefit from the shared idiom. The Greek *koinē* flowered so as also to produce a vast literature in this standardised idiom and it spread with Alexander's armies to become a hegemonic official language throughout the Seleucid Empire and, subsequently, the Roman East. For non-Greeks who used Greek as a second language, adopting it for its prestige, this Greek was just 'Greek', the only Greek they were generally aware of, unless they had had a full Hellenic education.

Returning to the three situations in which Aramaic came to have a special non-local usage, Aramaic began in the early first millennium BCE to displace an earlier, non-Aramaic Middle Eastern lingua franca, Akkadian, which in its various dialects had spread to the areas where cuneiform culture came to dominate (see further below). This displacement had already begun before the Achaemenid period (Hackl 2021), but the new political circumstances of that period accelerated the process and brought it to a new level.

## 1.1. The Achaemenid Persian Empire

The Achaemenid Persian Empire (539–330 BCE) adopted Aramaic as its diplomatic and commercial language, forming what Gzella (2015, 169) calls "a supra-regional *koiné*," though it did not replace the local Aramaic dialects. Why and how it was deliberately chosen for this role is hard to pin down, but Aramaic, in various dialects, had been used already in Syria and Mesopotamia for many centuries before the Persians arrived on the scene, as we have seen. All the subject peoples of the Empire on its western side spoke non-Iranian languages and for many of them some form of Aramaic was the vernacular. Aramaic had already been used by the Assyrians and Babylonians as a medium of communication with western allies and in their own administrations. So the emergence of Imperial Aramaic as an international language was a gradual process and had earlier stages. In fact, it was never totally uniform (Folmer 1995), but sufficiently unified to serve its communicative purpose.

Perhaps most surprising is the fact that a language which had never been that of any significant state or international power came to have such an important role, becoming a literary as well as chancellery language (Gzella 2017)—it has often been said that the Aramaeans left little behind them except their language! (This is an exaggeration, but it is certainly true that the language itself has always been the main feature of Aramaeanness.)

It will be clear that the situation of Achaemenid-period Aramaic does not fit the narrow definition of a lingua franca. Imperial Aramaic was not a 'made up' language used for minimal commercial communication, but a fully-developed international language used by native speakers of different languages (such as Hebrew, Babylonian Akkadian, Lycian, and other Anatolian languages, as well as Iranian and north Indian languages—and, of course, Aramaic itself). It was not a mixture, like the Mediterranean lingua franca, or a pidgin or a creole, and it produced its own literature. The best analogies for it in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern spheres are Greek, Latin, and Classical Arabic, though in those cases, cultural sharing (literary, religious, legal) was more important than diplomatic or commercial need. This Achaemenid Aramaic dissolved into local forms of Aramaic soon after the 'glue' which held it together, the Achaemenid Empire, disappeared. Local forms of Aramaic reasserted themselves, resulting in due course in the formation of "new local chancellery languages" (Gzella 2015, 214), later evidenced in Jewish Aramaic, Nabataean Aramaic, and Edessan Aramaic legal papyri and parchments.

## 1.2. The Late Antique and Medieval Periods

In the Late Antique and Medieval periods Aramaic became the language of religion, second only to Hebrew (and of equal practical import), for the Jews of the Middle East, with evidence extending from Egypt to Babylonia and beyond. It became, in effect, a sacred language alongside Hebrew, the vehicle for much of the Jewish cultural memory of community history and identity.

Although at first there were two main dialects of Jewish Aramaic, a Palestinian one (Jewish Palestinian Aramaic) and a Mesopotamian one (Jewish Babylonian Aramaic), the development of the great Jewish academies in Mesopotamia and the consolidation of Judaic learning there in the fifth to eighth centuries CE gave Jewish Babylonian Aramaic a dominant role (Gzella 2015, 348–57). There was much mixing of linguistic traditions between Babylonia and Palestine, leading to what Gzella (2015, 309) calls "a new, supra-regional… and highly standardised written code." Most of the Jews who used it initially were probably native speakers of one Aramaic dialect or another (so that it would qualify for the term koine—compare Greek above), but in its religious role, this communal Jewish Aramaic was also taken up by Jews who did not speak *any* form of Aramaic, but some other language: they learned both Hebrew and Aramaic as second languages, probably using both only in limited religious contexts. 'Jewish Aramaic' could be compared perhaps with Latin in medieval Europe or Classical Arabic, as a learned language essential for participation in what had become international Judaism.

Like Classical Arabic and Latin, Jewish Aramaic enjoyed a special sanctity, not so much because part of the so-called 'Hebrew Bible' is in fact written in Aramaic, but because the Targums (Aramaic translations of the Bible) and, more importantly, the Rabbinic literary tradition used Aramaic as a vehicle of the religion. Its theological discussions were often conducted in Aramaic, exemplified by the Masoretic annotations which surround and ensure the accurate preservation of the biblical text. Discussion of them was conducted in Aramaic.

### 1.3. Classical Syriac

Similarly, Classical Syriac, based on the local Aramaic of the Edessa region, became from about 200 CE the main communal language of the largest block of Middle East Christians. This variety of Aramaic was later labelled 'Edessan', though it must have been used over a much wider area: neither of the earliest stars of Syriac literature, Ephrem and Aphrahaṭ, was in fact Edessan in origin (though Ephrem moved to Edessa from Nisibis).

This dialect of Aramaic is the one in which the Syriac Bible (the Peshiṭṭā) was promulgated under Bishop Rabbūlā of Edessa (411–435). It quickly achieved a high level of linguistic as well as religious authority, the latter in the context of the Christological disputes which entrenched an East-West division. It also grew in prestige as the vehicle of the most important of the Syriac Christian texts, becoming a sacred language whose style or register Syriac-writing Christians thereafter imitated, even if their own local Aramaic dialect was rather different from it. It was in this sense a koine like *koinē* Greek.

However, because of missionary activity, Syriac was also taken to Iran and the Gulf and beyond to India and China along the Silk Route. Monks and bishops of the Church of the East became fluent in Classical Syriac as part of their commitment to the Church, even if they were native speakers of Farsi or Malayalam or Chinese. So again, like *koinē* Greek, Classical Syriac became a koine so far as Christian Aramaic speakers were concerned, though it extended beyond that role and came to be used by non-speakers of Aramaic.

The Syriac Bible, the Peshiṭṭā, of which the individual books are of disparate origins which reveal traces of early dialectal variation (Weitzman 1999; van Peursen 2008; see below), became the model of the literary register of this koine, prompting the standardisation of the 'Classical Syriac' of later times, but it is quite difficult to know how far this Syriac was used in everyday affairs outside the religious context. There is little surviving evidence of everyday documents being written in Syriac after the third century CE (from which we have legal texts drawn up in a Roman context: see, conveniently, Drijvers and Healey 2009, 231–48). A few ostraca from Tell Tuneinir in Byzantine-era Syria (Fuller and Fuller 1998, 73, with information kindly provided by Prof. Michael Fuller) and of the eighth/ninth century CE from Tikrit in Iraq (Harrak 2010, 614–23, nos FA.01.09–16) survive, as well as a few papyri (so the seventh-century P.Berol. Inv. 8285: Brashear 1998, 93–100, pl. xiii; Brock 1999). These suggest that Syriac was in everyday use. Some of these texts are hard to classify linguistically, but can be interpreted as reflecting the contin-

uing development of local dialects of Aramaic in the Syro-Mesopotamian region, developments which led to the great variety of modern dialects which have been extensively described in recent years (Ṭūrōyō and North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic [NENA]).

## 2.0. Koines or *Linguae Francae*

An oddity of scholarly tradition is the fact that the term lingua franca is constantly used, especially of Imperial Aramaic (e.g., Healey 2009, 44; Gzella 2015, 39–40, 162–65, etc.; most recently Folmer 2020), though there is little similarity to the Mediterranean lingua franca from which the term itself arose. Nor is it similar to any of the other 'langues véhiculaires' described by Calvet (1981), such as Swahili. Despite this, there is a certain similarity to linguae francae in that all three of the above forms of Aramaic served the function of international communication, whether in trade or in administration or in religion and literature. So we may refer to Aramaic in each of the three phases as a lingua franca of diplomacy or commerce or religious discourse, though bearing in mind that this gives the term the wider definition.

The term koine fits better in all three cases, though again the fit is imperfect. Arguably, Achaemenid Aramaic was a koine, though its precise origins in Babylonia are still obscure and there remains some debate about how standardised it was (see especially Folmer 1995). 'Jewish Aramaic' is quite varied too, though arguably within certain limits which, especially so far as written texts were concerned, did not risk mutual incomprehension (e.g., between Jews in Palestine and Babylonia). Classical Syriac is

much more uniform across the whole world of Syriac Christianity, mainly, one supposes, because of the dominant position which the Peshiṭṭā came to have, providing a standard or model of good Syriac, and because of the centralising structures of the Syriac Churches, where communication with and travel to the main administrative centres of the Churches in Syria and Mesopotamia was always important as an expression of ecclesiastical identity. (The differences of pronunciation tradition with regard to vowels reflects the east-west division of the Syriac church, but this variation does not constitute two independent dialects.)

## 3.0. Local Forms of Aramaic in the Roman Period

One is tempted to use the term 'global', using this term within the framework of the ancient Near Eastern *oikoumenē*, for the wide spread of Aramaic under the Persians. Jewish Aramaic and certainly Syriac enjoyed geographically widespread currency, though within particular faith communities. Different local forms of Aramaic remained widespread into the period of Middle Aramaic (ca. 300 BCE–200 CE). The Aramaic of this period consisted of some sort of dialect continuum rather than a clear division into eastern and western (see Boyarin 1981; Butts 2021, 224–25). Within this context, intercommunal use of Aramaic also existed, situations in which separate communities—pagan, Jewish, and Christian—used shared, common forms of Aramaic—local koines—for legal and official purposes (as one part of a wider 'cultural koine' of shared habits), even when those communities maintained their own variety of the language.

The evidence of close integration alongside variation includes the situation in Palestine/Transjordan in the first and second centuries CE. The Nabataeans wrote their inscriptions and legal documents in what we call Nabataean Aramaic, as Judaeans used Jewish Aramaic in Roman Palestine. The Babatha archive (Yadin et al. 2002) and other contemporary archives (e.g., Cotton and Yardeni 1997) suggest a free flow of documentary Aramaic across this political and cultural divide. Babatha's archive contains several purely Nabataean documents (Nabataean dialect and Nabataean script), but also, of course, Judaean Aramaic documents (in the Judaean script).

P.Yadin 8, recording the purchase of a donkey, the transfer taking place between two Jewish brothers, with no evidence of any Nabataean involvement, is written in the Jewish script, but was claimed by Klaus Beyer (2004, 224) to be in the Nabataean dialect. It was drawn up by the scribe Yōḥanān son of Makkūtā, who was also the scribe of Nabataean document P.Yadin 9 (and probably P.Yadin 6: Yadin et al. 2002, 269), as well as a Greek document, P.Yadin 22 (Lewis 1989). P.Yadin 6 represents a transaction between Jews which is written in Nabataean Aramaic and the evidence suggests that scribes were happy to write in either dialect using either script.

A number of documents which are in the *Jewish* form of script—P.Yadin 7, P.Yadin 8, and even P.Yadin 10 (Babatha's *ketubba*)—were claimed by Beyer (2004, 217–24, 226–28) to be composed in the Nabataean dialect of Aramaic. The arguments advanced by him are suggestive, but not entirely definitive, and this is not the place to engage with them in detail. The envisaged

situation would not, however, be out of line with the intercommunal commonality we know from the content of the archives. This would provide an example of an Aramaic koine of a more restricted kind than the three major examples discussed above, a local, but still an intercommunal common language of law and commerce, arising from the fact that Jews and Nabataeans lived side by side in the area around Zoar and Maḥōzā at the southern tip of the Dead Sea. All were under the rule of the Nabataean kings (until 106 CE) and they had different forms of writing. Their legal culture (certainly in terms of the law of sale and other everyday transactions) was a shared one.

Another, slightly different, intercommunal Aramaic seems to have existed in the areas where Syriac emerged. The most direct evidence consists of several inscriptions from a Jewish necropolis at Kırk Mağara near Edessa written by Jews, as is indicated by a Jewish form of script, Jewish personal names (Joseph, Samuel), a listing of named individuals in a bilingual as Ἰουδέων (= Ἰουδαίων, genitive plural) (Pognon 1907, 79, no. 42), and the carving of a menorah on a tomb nearby (Segal 1970, 27, pl. 16a). Despite the natural inclination to count these texts as different from the dozens of contemporary early Syriac inscriptions, the Aramaic of these inscriptions in the Jewish script has grammatical features which are characteristic of Syriac (Pognon 1907, 78–79, nos 40, 41, 42–43, the last being the bilingual in Syriac and Greek; Noy and Bloedhorn 2003, 128–32, nos Syr78, Syr79, Syr80; for the Greek Canali de Rossi 2004, 18–19, no. 26).

The first lines of two of these inscriptions are *hnʾ byt ʿlmʾ dʾ*… (Pognon no. 40) and *hnʾ byʿlmʾ dʾ*… (no. 43), ‘This is the tomb

of …'. The demonstrative *hnʾ* is distinctively Syriac and common in early Edessan inscriptions in introductory phrases of this kind (Drijvers and Healey 1999, As5, As23, As24, As29, etc.), while *d-* (rather than *dī*, with *plene* writing as *dy*, as normally in western Aramaic) is the Syriac form of the possessive particle. The form *by(t)ʿlmʾ*, though known elsewhere (including P.Yadin 7.15, 71; P.Yadin 10.15; P.XḤev/Se 51a.2) is particularly common in the Edessan Syriac inscriptions (Drijvers and Healey 1999, nos As7, As9, Am2, Am3, etc., and in some subsequently published inscriptions, such as those in Brock 2013; Rumscheid 2013, 120–24; Gioia and Healey 2023). These Jewish inscriptions should be treated as Syriac, as already suggested tentatively by Pognon (1907, 78 on no. 40) and could be added to the corpus in Drijvers and Healey (1999).

To this epigraphic evidence we can add the broader evidence of the Peshiṭtā Old Testament (henceforth P). There is widespread scholarly consensus that it has Jewish or, perhaps in the case of some biblical books, Jewish-Christian origins. The Hebraisms in P certainly reflect direct translation from Hebrew. It is in some sense a Jewish Syriac *targum*, though in a different tradition from that of the Targums themselves (see especially Weitzman 1999, 234–37, 258–62, emphasising its divergence in many respects from the known Targums; in general Brock 2006[2], 23–27, 109–10). This view implies, necessarily, that there was a literate Jewish population in the Edessa region speaking and writing Syriac.

The Syriac of P is not, however, entirely uniform. Distinctive characteristics can be identified in different biblical books

and the lack of uniformity is reflected in some of the earliest manuscripts (van Peursen 2008). Weitzman distinguished books with 'conservative' and 'modern' translational characteristics (Weitzman 1999, 167–81). In general, these translations reflect the pre-Classical stages of Syriac, prior to the formation of Classical Syriac in its standard form (van Peursen 2008, 238–39). Butts has recently reasserted this broad interpretation, while adding an argument for a gradual process of convergence which led to the definitive form of Classical Syriac (Butts 2019, 224–27).

The Jewish Syriac of some of the translations in P may not have been totally identical with the early Syriac spoken by pagans in the Edessa region and we know from the so-called 'Old Syriac' or Edessan inscriptions that Syriac in this, its earliest epigraphic manifestation, was not uniform: it displays minor divergences from Classical Syriac, interpretable as dialectal variants (Healey 2008), and a Jewish variant probably existed also (cf. the Jewish inscriptions above, though they are very brief, and hard to distinguish from the normal Edessan 'Syriac', as we have seen).

The variability within P is reflected in the non-Syriac feature of the use of the accusative particle *yāṯ* sixteen times in P Song of Songs and Qoheleth, though only three times otherwise in the whole of the Bible (and extremely rarely in later Syriac). Traditionally this particle was seen as an archaism or a western Aramaic feature (for *yt* in western Aramaic see Khan 1984, 468; Beyer 2004, 413; see discussion in van Peursen 2008, 241). Weitzman (1999, 184–85) explained its appearance and other distinctive features of these books (such as the more frequent use of the

construct) as indicating a different translator, in line with his general conclusion on P that a variety of translators explains the differences between the books. As noted above, he used the terms 'conservative' and 'modern' to characterise individual translations (Weitzman, 167–81; van Peursen 2008, 241–43). However, alongside this argument for 'archaisms', there is the possibility that different *contemporary* speakers of Aramaic in the Syriac-speaking area spoke and wrote in slightly different variations of the language, even if, as Weitzman concludes, the translators were "colleagues in a single school" (see Weitzman 1999, 164–205, specifically 205).

## 4.0. Concluding Remarks

In the discussion of koines, it is difficult to avoid making a brief comparison with other international languages known from the Middle East. As noted above, during the ascendancy of the great Mesopotamian empires which preceded the Achaemenids, Akkadian and Mesopotamian culture created for some earlier periods a linguistic and cultural koine. Places like Ebla, south of Aleppo, and Alalakh and Ugarit, close to the Mediterranean coast, became outposts of this Mesopotamian scribal culture and used a western form of Akkadian written in cuneiform script as a vehicle for international communication, even while local languages continued as the vernaculars (Vita 2020; 2021 on Syria and Canaan). Becoming a lingua franca in the later second millennium BCE, Akkadian extended as far as Egypt (Müller 2021), used by Amarna period rulers in communication with Palestine and Syria, though

Akkadian was spoken as a vernacular in neither Egypt nor Palestine (see also Malbran-Labat 2021 on Akkadian in Elam). Here we have the use of a culturally hegemonic language as a language of diplomacy, similar to the use of French and English in modern times.

The other inevitable *comparandum* is Arabic. It owed its rise in importance to the spread of Islam and the highly regulated (and rather artificial) Classical Arabic came to be used as a 'high' language, replacing for this purpose, in religious discourse and ultimately also in general literature, local dialects which were of a similar Arabian character, as well as non-Arabic languages, such as forms of Aramaic, Iranian languages, Coptic, Berber, etc. In the case of Aramaic, as with some of the other local languages, such as Coptic, this led to a rapid decline in use of those local languages for literary purposes: Syriac-speaking Christians had no theological objection to the use of Arabic, and many used it even in the liturgy. The cultural pre-eminence of Classical Arabic led to its spread as a supra-dialectal koine, extending itself, because of its religious prestige, to areas where no form of Arabic was spoken as a vernacular.

The historic role of Aramaic as a Semitic lingua franca stands alongside that of Akkadian and Arabic. It has a longer history than both, though its periods of full functioning as a lingua franca and koine have been relatively brief (the Achaemenid period) and it was only a lingua franca later in a more restricted sense, i.e., for religious communities (Jewish and Christian). According to the evidence available to us, it also had in the Middle

Aramaic period an important intercommunal role in relation to particular cultural spheres (notably legal, funerary, and literary).

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# ARABIC SPELLS AGAINST MENSTRUAL BLEEDING IN MANDAIC SCRIPT

*Matthew Morgenstern and Tom Alfia*

In 1943, Lady Ethel Drower briefly noted the existence of Arabic magic spells in Mandaic transcription contained in two 'recipe books' that served amulet writers in Baghdad during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Drower 1943, 149).[1] In the course of a comprehensive survey of Mandaic manuscripts for the preparation of lexically tagged digital editions of the corpus, it became apparent that the scope of the Arabic materials demanded a separate study.

An introductory overview of the Arabic materials in these manuscripts and their linguistic and cultural background has been published elsewhere.[2] For reasons of space, it shall suffice

[1] The manuscripts are numbers 45 and 46 in the Drower Collection of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. For further details on these manuscripts see Morgenstern and Abudraham (f.c.).

[2] See Morgenstern and Alfia (2013). Since that article was completed, two additional spell handbooks containing Arabic spells in Mandaic transcription have come to our attention, both housed in the Bibliothèque National de France (Codex Sabéen 24 and 27), as well as several smaller fragments held by the Berlin Staatsbibliothek. The magical

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to reiterate here that the evidence indicates that these Mandaean transcriptions were prepared in the modern era from Islamic (Shiite) amulets written in Arabic script. Parallels in Arabic script indicate that the source materials were most likely composed in Standard Arabic, but have been transcribed with considerable influences of local *gilit* dialects similar, but not identical to that of Baghdad (see in brief Morgenstern and Alfia 2013, 171–72). The texts thus provide an interesting example of works composed in one idiom, yet read through the perspective of another. The corpus is also of interest for scholars of reading traditions, who must address such phenomena.

In this article, we present a preliminary edition of six amuletic formulae found in these manuscripts for treatment of excessive bleeding. The texts are *historiolae* (see, e.g., Frankfurter 1995), in which heavenly warrior "blood kings" are described as descending from heaven to cut off the flow of blood from mothers and daughters. The heavily armed kings are described in traditional fashion from head to foot, a practice already found in earlier magical and other sources.[3] The Mandaic instructions indicate that the Mandaean practitioners regarded them as effective primarily against excessive menstrual bleeding.

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handbooks are discussed in greater detail in Morgenstern and Abudraham (f.c.). On colloquial Arabic in Mandaic script, see now also Häberl (2021).

[3] For medical and protective texts from Mesopotamia, see, e.g., Stol (1991, 49); Müller-Kessler (1991, 344); Geller (2000, 15). Compare in particular the description of Bagdānā in the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic magic bowl AMB 13, published in Naveh and Shaked (1998, 198–214).

As we noted in our previous article and discuss in some places below, the transcriptions contain many errors which stem from both a misreading of the Arabic original and inaccurate copying of the Mandaic transcription. Such errors impede the reconstruction of the Arabic *Vorlagen*. The copies of these spells in the BNF manuscripts are generally more corrupt than those in the manuscripts of the Drower Collection, but occasionally contain superior readings. Furthermore, many of the formulae follow a similar pattern and contain parallel expressions, a fact that greatly assists us in reconstructing the Arabic sources. Nonetheless, many textual problems remain, and it is likely that the interpretations presented herein may be improved upon by reference to parallels in Arabic script that are unknown to us. Our aim here is to make these texts available for further study, and to provide more substantial evidence for the phenomena that we have previously discussed. For a lack of space, our notes are kept to a minimum.

This article is happily dedicated to Prof. Geoffrey Khan, whose seminal works on Hebrew texts in Arabic transcription and on reading traditions are model for emulation.

## 1.0. The Texts

The amulets are presented here in a diplomatic transliteration in the Mandaic and Latin scripts, followed by the 'rubrics' found in the manuscript for the use of the amulets. The text is presented exactly according to the line divisions in the original. Variant readings are presented in Latin transliteration alone. The tran-

scriptions are followed by a proposed reconstruction of the Arabic *Vorlage* and an English translation, both of which are divided according to sense units rather than the line divisions of the Mandaic transliteration. Verses from the Qurʾān are identified and vocalised.

## 1.1. Text 1

Source: DC 45. 22b:12–22; CS 27. 52b:16–53a:13. RRC 1D.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *nazal mn lsama*[1] *malk mn ʿl dam la* | ܢܙܠ ܡܢ ܠܫܡܐ ܡܠܟ ܡܢ ܥܠ ܕܡ ܠܐ |
| 2 | *bis gimṣan*[2] *mn ʿl dam*[3] *ʿala rasa* | ܒܝܣ ܓܡܨܢ ܡܢ ܥܠ ܕܡ ܥܠ ܪܣܐ |
| 3 | *kariš*[4] *mn ʿl dam*[5] *rakib šiuad*[6] | ܟܪܝܫ ܡܢ ܥܠ ܕܡ ܪܟܝܒ ܫܝܘܐܕ |
| 4 | *mn ʿl dam*[7] *bida gidum mn ʿl dam*[8] | ܡܢ ܥܠ ܕܡ ܒܕܐ ܓܕܘܡ ܡܢ ܥܠ ܕܡ |
| 5 | *ngiṭiʿ*[9] *aia aiha*[10] *ldam mn faraš*[11] | ܢܓܝܛܝܥ ܐܝܐ ܐܝܗܐ ܠܕܡ ܡܢ ܦܪܫ |
| 6 | *filana bint flan*[12] *bhaq hada*[13] *lsama*[14] | ܦܠܢܐ ܒܢܬ ܦܠܢ ܒܗܩ ܗܕܐ ܠܫܡ |
| 7 | *mn nakih lbinut uʿhmhaʿan*[15] | ܡܢ ܢܟܝܗ ܠܒܢܘܬ ܐܥܗܡܗܥ |
| 8 | *nakih lbint*[16] *lfaraš brahamtak*[17] | ܢܟܝܗ ܠܒܢܬ ܠܦܪܫ ܒܪܗܡܬܟ |
| 9 | *ia rahim*[18] *lrahamin*[19] | ܝܐ ܪܚܝܡ ܠܪܚܡܝܢ |
| 10 | *s—a* | ܨ ـــ ܐ |
| 11 | *hazin psaqa*[20] *ḏhšuka kdub ʿl*[21] | ܗܕܐ ܙܝܢ ܦܣܩ ܕܗܫܘܟ ܟܕܘܒ ܥܠ |
| | *ṣudra*[22] *ḏʿnta*[23] *ḏm* | ܨܘܕܪ ܕܥܢܬ ܕܡ |
| 12 | *ṭanpa mn buṣura*[24] *ʿla šipulah*[25] *s—a* | ܛܢܦ ܡܢ ܒܘܨܘܪ ܥܠ ܫܝܦܘܠܗ ܨ ـــ ܐ |

[1] Corrected according to CS 27; DC 45: *lsam*. [2] CS 27: *gam ṣan*; RRC: *gimiṣin*. [3] RRC: *ldam*. [4] CS 27: *fariš*; RRC: *karš*. [5] RRC: *ldam*. [6] CS 27: *uas*. [7] CS 27: *mn dam*. RRC: *mn ldam*. [8] RRC: *ldam*. [9] RRC: *angiṭiʿ*. [10] CS 27: *ia aha*. RRC: *iaaiaha* [11] RRC: *farš*. [12] CS 27: *flan bint falana*. RRC: [only:] *filana*. [13] CS 27: *haza*. [14] CS 27: *lsma*. [15] RRC: *uʿum haʿan*. [16] RRC: *lbinut*. [17] CS 27: *bra hua mtak*. RRC: *bra|humtak*. [18] CS 27: *ia rahi*. RRC: *iarahim*. [19] CS 27: *lrahamin lrahim*. [20] RRC: *pšqa*. [21] RRC: *ʿlai*. [22] CS 27: *lhudra*. [23] Corrected according to CS 27 and RRC; DC 45: *ḏʿuta*. [24] Corrected according to CS 27; DC 45: *bnuba*; RRC: *bnura*. [25] CS 27: *ʿl šipulah*; RRC: *lšipuas*.

| | |
|---|---|
| A king of blood descended from heaven | نزل من السماء ملك من الدم |
| wearing a shirt of blood, | لابسا قميصًا من الدم |
| upon his head a silk shawl of blood | على رأسه كريش من الدم |
| riding a steed of blood, | راكبا جوادا من الدم |
| in his hand an axe of blood. | بيده قدوم من الدم |
| Be cut off, O blood, | انقطع يا أيّها الدم |
| From the loins of PN daughter of PN. | من فرج فلانة بنت فلان |
| By the right of these names, | بحق هذه الأسماء |
| from one who copulates with a daughter and her mother | من ناكح البنت وأمها |
| […] away from one who copulates with a daughter […] | عن ناكح البنت |
| the loins in your mercy, | الفرج برحمتك |
| Oh most merciful of all who show mercy! | يا أرحم الراحمين |

[Mandaic rubric:]

This is (for) cutting off menstrual blood. Write on the tunic of an impure woman from her collar to her loins.

## Notes

7. *uʿhmhaʿan*. The context and parallels indicate that this should be read *uʿumha ʿan* ‘and her mother from’. In this manuscript, the graphic difference between ڈکسڈکسہ *uʿhmha* and ڈکڈکسہ *uʿumha* is minimal. RRC supports our suggestion, but divides the words differently: *uʿum haʿan*.

12. *mn buṣura*. The reading of CS has been preferred here. On *b*(*u*)*ṣura* ‘collar’ in Mandaic, see Morgenstern (2018, 194).

## 1.2. Text 2

Source: DC 46. 147:7–148:4.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *bisim alah alrahman alrahim* | 𐡁𐡎𐡉𐡌 𐡀𐡋𐡄 𐡀𐡋𐡓𐡄𐡌𐡍 𐡀𐡋𐡓𐡀𐡄𐡉𐡌 |
| 2 | *nazal malk mn ldam labis gimis* | 𐡍𐡆𐡆𐡋 𐡌𐡋𐡊 𐡌𐡍 𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡋𐡀𐡁𐡉𐡎 𐡂𐡉𐡌𐡉𐡎 |
| 3 | *mn dam bʿda gadum mn dam ʿala* | 𐡌𐡍 𐡃𐡌 𐡁𐡏𐡃𐡀 𐡂𐡃𐡅𐡌 𐡌𐡍 𐡃𐡌 𐡏𐡋𐡀 |
| 4 | *rasah ʿamamah mn dam rašib*[4] | 𐡓𐡎𐡀𐡄 𐡏𐡌𐡌𐡀𐡄 𐡌𐡍 𐡃𐡌 𐡓𐡀𐡔𐡉𐡁 |
| 5 | *šauadna*[5] *mn dam ubʿda gadum mn* | 𐡔𐡅𐡀𐡃𐡍𐡀 𐡌𐡍 𐡃𐡌 𐡀𐡁𐡏𐡃𐡀 𐡂𐡃𐡅𐡌 𐡌𐡍 |
| 6 | *ldam fada rab aldim bildam angiṭiʿ* | 𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡐𐡃𐡀 𐡓𐡀𐡁 𐡀𐡋𐡃𐡉𐡌 𐡁𐡉𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡀𐡍𐡂𐡉𐡈𐡉𐡏 |
| 7 | *ia aiha ldam mn fariš planita* | 𐡉𐡀 𐡀𐡉𐡄𐡀 𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡌𐡍 𐡐𐡓𐡉𐡔 𐡐𐡋𐡀𐡍𐡉𐡕𐡀 |
| 8 | *kma angiṭʿat arahma ʿan nakha* | 𐡊𐡌𐡀 𐡀𐡍𐡂𐡉𐡈𐡏𐡀𐡕 𐡀𐡓𐡄𐡌𐡀 𐡏𐡍 𐡍𐡊𐡄𐡀 |
| 9 | *alʿašuz ubint aha ua uamha ukma* | 𐡀𐡋𐡏𐡀𐡔𐡅𐡆 𐡅𐡁𐡍𐡕 𐡀𐡄𐡀 𐡅𐡀 𐡅𐡀𐡌𐡄𐡀 𐡀𐡊𐡌𐡀 |
| 10 | *angiṭʿat lrahman ʿan nakha alfarah* | 𐡀𐡍𐡂𐡉𐡈𐡏𐡀𐡕 𐡋𐡓𐡀𐡄𐡌𐡍 𐡏𐡍 𐡍𐡊𐡄𐡀 𐡀𐡋𐡐𐡀𐡓𐡄 |
| 11 | *birahmtak ia arham alrahmin* | 𐡁𐡉𐡓𐡄𐡌𐡕𐡊 𐡉𐡀 𐡀𐡓𐡄𐡌 𐡀𐡋𐡓𐡀𐡄𐡉𐡌 |
| 12 | *balf ulahul ulaqubat alah bilah lʿalia* | 𐡁𐡋𐡐 𐡅𐡋𐡄𐡅𐡋 𐡅𐡋𐡒𐡅𐡁𐡕 𐡋𐡀𐡋𐡄 𐡁𐡉𐡋𐡄 𐡋𐡏𐡋𐡉𐡀 |
| 13 | *lʿadim tum ukamal s—a* | 𐡋𐡏𐡀𐡃𐡉𐡌 𐡕𐡅𐡌 𐡀𐡊𐡌𐡀𐡋 𐡎 |
| 14 | *hazin baba psaqa ḏhšuka kdub ʿlai gidma ḏpahil* | 𐡄𐡆𐡆𐡉𐡍 𐡁𐡀𐡁𐡀 𐡐𐡎𐡀𐡒𐡀 𐡆𐡄𐡔𐡅𐡊𐡀 𐡊𐡃𐡅𐡁 𐡏𐡋𐡉 𐡂𐡉𐡃𐡌𐡀 𐡐𐡀𐡄𐡉𐡋 |
| 15 | *bsikinta min giliit midad ubadqath bšamšia iabuš* | 𐡁𐡎𐡉𐡊𐡉𐡍𐡕𐡀 𐡌𐡉𐡍 𐡂𐡉𐡋𐡉𐡉𐡕 𐡌𐡉𐡃𐡃 𐡅𐡁𐡃𐡒𐡕 𐡁𐡔𐡌𐡔𐡉𐡀 𐡉𐡀𐡁𐡅𐡔 |

[4] On the basis of the other spells, we take 𐡓𐡀𐡔𐡉𐡁 *rašib* to be an inner-Mandaic copying error for 𐡓𐡀𐡊𐡉𐡁 *rakib*.

[5] Copying error, perhaps for *šauadan* or *šauadin*.

| | |
|---|---|
| In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. | بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم |
| An angel of blood descended | نزل ملك من الدم |
| wearing a shirt of blood, | لابسا قميصا من دم |
| in his hand an axe of blood | بيده قدوم من دم |
| and on his head a turban of blood, | وعلى رأسه عمامة من دم |
| riding a steed of blood, | راكبا جوادا من دم |
| in his hand an axe of blood, | وبيده قدوم من الدم |
| and he struck the blood with blood. | فضرب الدم بالدم |
| Be cut off, O blood, | انقطع يا أيّها الدم |
| from the loins of PN | من فرج ههدرحه |
| just as mercy was cut off | كما انقطعت الرحمة |
| from one who copulated with an old woman | عن ناكح العجوز |
| and her daughter and her mother | وبنتها وأمها |
| and as mercy was cut off | وكما انقطعت الرحمة |
| from one who copulated with the loins in your mercy. | عن ناكح الفرج[6] برحمتك |
| O Most Merciful of the Merciful, a thousand-fold! | يا أرحم الراحمين بألف |
| “there is no power and no strength | ولا حول ولا قوة |
| other than in Allah, the Exulted, the Mighty”. | إلا بالله العلي العظيم |
| Finished and completed. | تم وكمل |

[Mandaic rubric:]
This prescription is (for) cutting off menstrual blood. Write it on a palm frond with a knife with ... ink and place it in the sun (until) it dries.

---

[6] The manuscript reads *alfarah*, a misreading of the original Arabic text.

Notes

9. *ubint aha ua uamha*. On the basis of the parallels, we have taken this to be a minor graphic error for *ubintaha uaʿamha*, reflecting an Arabic *Vorlage* وبنتها وأمها.

10. *nakha alfarah*. We have interpreted *alfarah* as a misreading of the original Arabic الفرج as الفرح. The reading الفرح makes no sense in this context.

15. *giliit midad.* The meaning of these words is uncertain. *midad* appears to be Arabic مداد ‘ink’.

## 1.3. Text 3

DC 46. 146:8–147:6.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *bisim alah alrahman alrahim* | 𐡁𐡎𐡌 𐡀𐡋𐡄 𐡀𐡋𐡓𐡄𐡌𐡍 𐡀𐡋𐡓𐡄𐡎𐡉𐡌 |
| 2 | *nazal malk mn ldam ulabis gimiṣ* | 𐡍𐡆𐡆𐡋 𐡌𐡋𐡊 𐡌𐡍 𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡅𐡋𐡁𐡎 𐡂𐡌𐡉𐡑 |
| 3 | *mn aldam uʿala rasah šalin mn* | 𐡌𐡍 𐡀𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡅𐡏𐡋𐡀 𐡓𐡀𐡔𐡄 𐡔𐡋𐡋𐡍 𐡌𐡍 |
| 4 | *ldam bʿdah rumhin mn dam umitšanid* | 𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡁𐡏𐡃𐡄 𐡓𐡅𐡌𐡄𐡉𐡍 𐡌𐡍 𐡃𐡌 𐡅𐡌𐡉𐡕𐡔𐡀𐡍𐡉𐡃 |
| 5 | *bisifan mn dam uarab*[7] *aldam bildam* | 𐡁𐡎𐡉𐡐𐡀𐡍 𐡌𐡍 𐡃𐡌 𐡅𐡏𐡓𐡀𐡁 𐡀𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡁𐡉𐡋𐡃𐡌 |
| 6 | *ʿngiṭiʿ ia aiha ldam bhaq haua* | 𐡏𐡂𐡉𐡈𐡉𐡏 𐡉𐡀 𐡀𐡉𐡄𐡀 𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡁𐡄𐡒 𐡄𐡀𐡅𐡀 |
| 7 | *uadam angiṭiʿ ia aiha ldam bihaq* | 𐡀𐡅𐡀𐡃𐡌 𐡀𐡍𐡂𐡉𐡈𐡉𐡏 𐡉𐡀 𐡀𐡉𐡄𐡀 𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡁𐡉𐡄𐡀𐡒 |
| 8 | *luḥ ulqalam angiṭiʿ ia aiha dam* | 𐡋𐡅𐡇 𐡀𐡋𐡒𐡀𐡋𐡌 𐡀𐡍𐡂𐡉𐡈𐡉𐡏 𐡉𐡀 𐡀𐡉𐡄𐡀 𐡃𐡌 |
| 9 | *bihaq manhu bil mahad tikalam* | 𐡁𐡉𐡄𐡀𐡒 𐡌𐡀𐡍𐡄𐡅 𐡁𐡉𐡋 𐡌𐡀𐡄𐡃 𐡕𐡉𐡊𐡀𐡋𐡌 |
| 10 | *angiṭiʿ ia aiha ldam bhaq brahim* | 𐡀𐡍𐡂𐡉𐡈𐡉𐡏 𐡉𐡀 𐡀𐡉𐡄𐡀 𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡁𐡄𐡒 𐡁𐡓𐡀𐡄𐡉𐡌 |
| 11 | *ʿbin lduam angiṭiʿ aiha ldam mn* | 𐡏𐡁𐡉𐡍 𐡋𐡃𐡅𐡀𐡌 𐡀𐡍𐡂𐡉𐡈𐡉𐡏 𐡀𐡉𐡄𐡀 𐡋𐡃𐡌 𐡌𐡍 |

[7] Copying error of 𐡁𐡓𐡀𐡁 *warab* for 𐡁𐡓𐡀𐡃 *darab*.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 12 | *planita laḥul ulaqubat ala bilah l'alia* | ࡅ ࡋ ࡀ ࡍ ࡋ ࡀ ࡍ ࡀ ࡋ ࡀ ࡋ ࡀ ࡋ

| | |
|---|---|
| other than in Allah, the Exulted, the Mighty". | إلا بالله العلي العظيم |
| Finished and completed. | تم وكمل |

[Mandaic rubric:]

This prescription is (for) cutting off menstrual blood. Write on paper and tie it to a woman at her loins, and the menstrual blood will be cut off from a woman or a man by the power of our lord, there will be relief.

### Notes

10–11. *brahim ʿbin lduam*. It may just be possible to read *ldham*. The name apparently also appears in Text 4, wherein DC 46 may be read *aldsam* or *albsam*, while DC 45 reads *alrham*, presumably reflecting a name based on the root *rḥm*. We have found none of these names in any Arabic source, and if this refers to the patriarch Abraham, the patronym remains opaque.

16. *ʿnta ugabra*. This appears to be a mechanical copying of a formula common in these collections. The spell is of course suitable only for women.

## 1.4. Text 4

This spell survives in four parallel copies. All copies contain errors, and the copy in CS 27.34a ff. (here cited as CS 27 B) is particularly corrupt. The text presented here is based primarily on DC 46, with some corrections introduced from DC 45 and CS 27 as noted. There is a slight difference in the versions in the section that invokes the beneficent agents.

Source: DC 46. 26:16–27:12; DC 45.10a:10–16; CS 27.36b:10–37a:9 (below: CS 27 A); CS 27. 34a:15–34b:10 (below: CS 27 B).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *bisim alah ʿl rahman*[1] *lrahim* | ܒܝܣܡ ܐܠܗ ܥܠ ܪܚܡܢ ܠܪܚܝܡ |
| 2 | *nizal malk mn aldam ulabis*[2] *gimiṣun*[3] | ܢܙܠ ܡܠܟ ܡܢ ܐܠܕܡ ܘܠܒܫ ܓܡܝܨܘܢ |
| 3 | *mn ʿl dam*[4] *bʿdah*[5] *<rumḥin>*[6] *mn dam*[7] *umitšanid*[8] | ܡܢ ܥܠ ܕܡ ܒܥܕܗ ‹ ‹ ‹

*llhus*. [13] Corrected according to CS 27 A; DC 46: *aldsam*; DC 45: *alrham*; CS 27 B: *albsanim*. [14] DC 45, CS 27 A, B: *ʿngiṭiʿ*. [15] DC 45: *iaiaha*. [16] CS 27 B: *ldam*. [17] DC 45, CS 27 A: *pta*. [18] DC 45: *ula uqubat*; CS 27 A: *ula rubat*. CS 27 B: *ula qubat*. [19] CS 27 A omits. [20] CS 27 B omits. [21] DC 45: *uripa*; CS 27 A: *urip*; CS 27 B: *uriupa*. [22] DC 45: *alʿnta*. CS 27 A: *ʿnta*. [23] CS 27 A: *ʿl halṣa*. CS 27 B: *alha lṣa* [24] DC 45: *m psiq*. CS 27 B: *mn psiq*. [25] CS 27 B: *gabra*; CS 27 A omits *mina ʿnta ugabra*. [26] CS 27 B: *bhailia*. [27]CS 27 A: *bhai ḏmarai hun*; CS 27 B: *ḏmaraiun*.

| | |
|---|---|
| In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. | بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم |
| An angel of blood descended | نزل ملك من الدم |
| wearing a shirt of blood, | ولابس قميصًا من الدم |
| in his hand <a lance> of blood | بيده (رمح) من دم |
| and fighting with a sword of blood, | ومتجند بسيف من الدم |
| He struck the blood with blood. | ضرب الدم بالدم |
| Be cut off, O blood, | انقطع يا أيها الدم |
| by the right of the board and the pen | بحق اللوح والقلم |
| Be cut off, O blood, | انقطع يا أيها الدم |
| by the right of Ibrahim, son of Adham, | بحق ابراهيم بن الأدهم |
| Be cut off, O blood | انقطع يا أيها الدم |
| from PN daughter of PN, | من ولدرتحم وبحم ولدرتحم |
| by the right of "and there is no power | بحق ولاحول |
| and no strength other than in Allah, the Exulted, the Mighty". | ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم |

[Mandaic rubric:]

This prescription is (for) cutting off menstrual blood. Write on paper and tie it to a woman at her loins, and the menstrual blood will be cut off from her; (for) a woman or a man by the power of our lord.

## Notes

7. *brahim ʿbin aldsam*. In DC 46, the patronym may be read *aldsam* or *albsam*. DC 45 reads *alrham*, presumably reflecting a name

based on the root *rḥm*. We have found neither name in any Arabic source.

## 1.5. Text 5

This text, while generally comprehensible in its structure, suffers from a number of textual corruptions that render several passages untranslatable. The parallel copies, while generally reflecting the same text, show a very large number of different corruptions and orthographic variants.

DC 46. 149:4–150:8; CS 27. 28a:3–28b:13.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *bisim alah lrahman alrahim hibaṭ*[1] | ؏ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم هبط |
| 2 | *malkin*[2] *mn amalkin mn aldam*[3] *ʿala faraṣin*[4] | ملك من ملوك من الدم على فراش |
| 3 | *mn dam*[5] *salṭa*[6] *mn dam*[5] *fada rab*[7] *ldam*[8] | من دم سلطة من دم فدى رب الدم |
| 4 | *bildam*[9] *ʿngiṭiʿ*[10] *ia aiha*[11] *aldam*[12] *bhaq*[13] | بالدم نقطع يا ايها الدم بهق |
| 5 | *haua uadam ubhaq*[13] *asm laʿṭm*[14] *lmukaram*[15] | هوا ودم وبهق اسم لعظم المكرم |
| 6 | *ʿladia*[16] *nazal*[17] *ʿala*[18] *ʿisa ʿbin mariam* | على دية نزل على عيسى بن مريم |
| 7 | *bhaq hada alsmai*[19] *lmuʿadmat fir*[20] | بهق هدا السماء المعدمة فر |
| 8 | *fir fir fir fir fir fir fir fir* | فر فر فر فر فر فر فر فر |
| 9 | *fir fir fir fir fir fir fir fir* | فر فر فر فر فر فر فر فر |
| 10 | *fir fir fir fir fir fir fir fir* | فر فر فر فر فر فر فر فر |
| 11 | *fir fir fir fir fir fir fir fir* | فر فر فر فر فر فر فر فر |
| 12 | *33*[21] *gilia*[22] *iard ablaʿia uia sama*[23] | ٣٣ جليا ارض ابلع يا وايا سما |

13 *aglaia*[24] *ugaia*[25] *lsama*[26] *unil*[27] *unidaka*[28] *uʿnia*

14 *maʿdina mstagiria*[29] *fasauk*[30] *maʿlamun*

15 *angiṭi*[31] *ia*[32] *aiha ldam ʿan fariš*[33]

16 *planita kima angiṭaʿ alrahma*[34] *mn*

17 *galb*[35] *aldia*[36] *lak lʿaṣuz*[37] *ubintaha*[38] *kima*[39]

18 *ngaṭi*[40] *lrahma*[41] *mn gaum*[42] *ldalmin ʿala*

19 *gaum*[43] *lkafrin uala masaina*[44] *filail ulnihar*[45]

20 *ulahul*[46] *ulaquat alah bilah lʿalia*[47] *lʿadim*

21 *hazin baba kdub uahbalah*[48] *lʿnta*[49] *ḏqaima bṭnupia*[50] *uraipailẖ*[51] *lhalṣa rupa ḏhšuka hu*[52] *s—a*

[1] Corrected according to CS 27; DC 46: *hamaṭ*. [2] CS 27: *malkan*. [3] CS 27: *ldam*. [4] CS 27: *farsin*. [5] CS 27: *ldam*. [6] CS 27: *salṭah*. [7] CS 27: *fdarub* (the *f*- is not connected the next word, and perhaps *fidarub* is to be read). [8] CS 27: *ʿl dam*. [9] CS 27: *bldam*. [10] Corrected according to CS 27; DC 46: *agṭaʿ*. [11] CS 27: *siha*. [12] CS 27: *ldam*. [13] CS 27: *bhaqi*. [14] CS 27: *ʿsim alah lʿdim*. [15] CS 27: *mukadam*. [16] CS 27: *aladia*. [17] CS 27: *nizal*. [18] CS 27 omits. [19] CS 27: *lsma*. [20] CS 27: *lmaʿadm tfir*. [21] CS 27 has the magic word *fir* 39 times (including the corrupt *tfir*), followed by: *hania tša utla tin*. [22] CS 27: *uqal*. [23] CS 27: *uia sima*. [24] CS 27: *aqlaʿia*. [25] CS 27: *ugai*. [26] CS 27: *usma*. [27] CS 27: *unala*. [28] CS 27: *nidaka*. [29] CS 27: *msta gira*. [30] CS 27: *fisak*. [31] CS 27: *ngiṭiʿ*. [32] CS 27: *iia*. [33] CS 27: *fariš*. [34] CS 27: *ngitʿat lrahma*. [35] CS 27: *qilub qalr*. [36] CS 27: *aladia*. [37] CS 27: *lʿauz*. [38] CS 27: *ubintha*. [39] CS 27: *kim*. [40] CS 27: *lugaṭaʿ*. [41] CS 27: *lra*. [42] CS 27: *rum*. [43] CS 27 omits. [44] CS 27: *ualama sina*. [45] CS 27: *uln har*. [46] CS 27: *ulaḥul*. [47] CS 27 omits *bilah lʿalia*. [48] Corrected according to CS 27; DC 46 omits. [49] Corrected according to CS 27; DC 46: *lrnta*.

[50] for *ḏqaima bṭnupia* CS 27 reads synonymous: *ḏhazia hšuka*. [51] CS 27: *uripa*. [52] For *ḏhšuka hu* CS 27 reads *mipsaq hšuka minah*.

| | |
|---|---|
| In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. | بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم |
| An angel of blood descended[8] | هبط ملك من ملك من الدم |
| on a horse of blood | على فرسٍ من دم |
| … a jacket/an arrow (?) of blood | … سلطة من دم |
| He struck the blood with blood. | فضرب الدم بالدم |
| Be cut off, O blood, | انقطع يا أيها الدم |
| By the right of Eve and Adam | بحق حواء وآدم |
| By the right of the name of the Great and Honoured One. | وبحق اسم العظيم المكرم |
| Who sent down (his inspiration) to Jesus, son of Miriam | الذي نزل على عيسى ابن مريم |
| By the right of these great names | بحق هذا (!) الأسماء المعظمة |
| *fir fir fir* (33 [times]) | فير فير فير…٣٣ |
| "And it was said: O earth! Swallow thy water and, O sky! be cleared of clouds! And the water was made to subside"[9] | {وَقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاءَكِ وَيَا سَمَاء أَقْلِعِي وَغِيضَ الْمَاء} |
| …[10] "a fixed time, and ye will come to know."[11] | … معدن {مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ} |
| Be cut off, O blood, | انقطع يا أيها الدم |
| from the loins of PN | عن فرج ولدرحم |
| just as mercy was cut off from the heart of | كما انقطع الرحمة من قلب |

[8] See notes.

[9] Excerpt from Surat al-Hūd 44.

[10] Uninterpretable text.

[11] Excerpt from Surat al-ʾAnʿām 63, starting mid-verse.

| | |
|---|---|
| one who… and old woman and her daughter | الذي لك (!) العجوز وبنتها |
| and just as mercy was cut off | كما انقطع الرحمة |
| from the wrongdoing and heretical folk. | من قوم الظالمين على قوم الكافرين |
| “Unto Him belongeth whatsoever resteth in the night and the day.”[12] | {وَلَهُ مَا سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ} |
| “there is no power and no strength | ولا حول ولا قوة |
| other than in Allah, the Exulted, the Mighty”. | إلا بالله العلى العظيم |

[Mandaic rubric:]
Write this prescription write for a woman who is in impurity and tie upon her at her loins; it is a tie(-charm) for menstruation.

## Notes

1. *hibaṭ* (var: *habaṭ*). From the context, we have interpreted this as a phonetic variant of *habaṭ*. However, it could also be an inner-Mandaic graphic error of ࡔ‌ࡀ‌ࡌ‌ࡀ‌ *hamaṭ* for ࡄ‌ࡀ‌ࡌ‌ࡀ‌ *hamal*.
2. *malkin mn amalkin mn aldam*. The parallels suggest that this is dittography.
3. *salṭa mn dam*. The text appears to be lacking at this point. The parallels suggest that the narrative here should contain a description of the king’s clothing or weaponry, and accordingly *salṭa* may be taken to represent Arabic سَلْطة ‘a jacket’,[13] or سِلْطة, which *Lisān al-ʿArab* defines as السهْمُ الطويلُ ‘a long arrow’.

7–12. *fir fir*… 33. Numerals are often employed in the magic recipe books when a symbol is to be repeated a specific number of

[12] Surat al-ʾAnʿām 13.

[13] Proposed to us by Prof. R. Forster.

times in the amulet. We have interpreted *fir* here as a magic word, rather than a form of the root *frr*. If this were an imperative form, the colloquial pronunciation would be *furr*.

12. *gilia iard ablaʿia*. On such corruptions in Qurʾān citations, see Morgenstern and Alfia (2013, 172–74).

16–17. *mn galb aldia lak*. The Arabic lying behind this phrase is not entirely clear. *galb* may be interpreted as قلب 'heart' or غالب 'overpower'. الذي لك *aldia lak* 'who is for you/yours' makes little sense in this context. We would expect a formula that is parallel to the expression عن ناكح العجوز وبنتها وبنتها وأمها *ʿan nakha alʿašuz ubint aha ua uamha* found above.

## 1.6. Text 6

This talisman survives in two parallel copies; both contain errors. The text presented here is based primarily on DC 46, with some corrections introduced from DC 45 as noted. The formula differs somewhat in its structure from the previous talismans.

Source: DC 46. 198:10–199:6; DC 45.22a:22–22b:11.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *bisim alah ʿazimt*[1] *ʿalaik*[2] *ia aiha*[3] | ڀسصے ٥ے ٧ےلٰ٤ ڂڪےا٤ ڀسلٰ٥ ڪےصے |
| 2 | *ldam ʔl šaraď*[4] *balah ubaladia* | ٥ےڪلٰڪڎ ڀسلٰڪڎ ڪڪلٰ٥٩٥ ڪلٰ ڪےلٰ |
| 3 | *akrišak mn fariš*[5] *ʔl zakar askun*[6] | ٧ےصے ڪےرےا ڪلٰ ٩٥ڪےلٰ٩ ٧ڪا ٧٥٩٥ڪرے٥ |
| 4 | *kima sakin ʔl lail ulnahar*[7] *askan* | ٧ےصے ڪےسےلٰ٧ےلٰ ڪلٰ ٧ےرےصے ےڪا٧ |
| 5 | *bhaq*[8] *rab ʔl ladia*[9] *ʿalaqt bismah* | ڀسڪےصے ڪڂلٰ٤ ٥ےلٰ ڪلٰ ڪڪلٰ ڀسڪ |
| 6 | *ʔl akuar ʿngiṭi*[10] *aia iaha*[11] *ldam*[12] | ڪےلٰ ڀسے٥ے ٥ے٥ ٤ےلٰےڑ ڪےلٰ٧ے٥ ڪلٰ |
| 7 | *mn fariš*[13] *planita askun binur alah* | ڀسلٰ٥ ڪےلٰ٧ے ٧ےصے ےڪا٧ےلٰ٤ ٩٥ڪےلٰ٩ ٧ڪا |
| 8 | *askun*[14] *bišalal*[15] *alah askun baqu-drat*[16] | ٧ےصے ڀسلٰ٥ ٧ےلٰ٥٩٥ڪے ٧ےصے ڪےڪڎڪڎڪے |
| 9 | *alah askun*[17] *bmin*[18] *falaq*[19] *lbahar* | ڪےڀسڪلٰڪڎ٧ ٧ےڪے ٧ےصے ڀسلٰ٥ |
| 10 | *lmusa uatfa ʔl nar ʿan*[20] *brahim* | ےا٥ڀسڪے ٧٥٤ ڪےر ڪلٰ ٥٤ٰلٰ٥ ٥ڪصڪلٰ |

11 *lkalil ʿalih*[21] *ʔl salam askun mn*[22]

12 *plana*[23] *uʿngiṭiʿ*[24] *iadam balf ulahul*

13 *ulaqubat alah bilah lʿalia lʿadim*

14 *hazin baba kdub ʔl ṣidra*[25] *dauran ʔl*[26] *ḥalṣa lman*

15 *amṭanpa bhšuka*[27] *hauia ruaha uasuta lhaza hšuka*[28]

16 *s—a*

[1] CS 27: *ʿazamt*. [2] CS 27: *ʿalaif*. [3] Corrected according to DC 45, CS 27; DC 46: *iaiaiah*. [4] DC 45: *šarar*; CS 27: *šarari*. [5] DC 45: *faraš*; CS 27: *faqaš*. [6] CS 27: *zaka raskun*. [7] DC 45: *ulunahar*, corrected by erasure dot to *ulnahar*. [8] CS 27: *bhaqa*, perhaps with final *-a* erased. [9] Corrected according to CS 27; DC 46: *ladai*; DC 45: *laria*. [10] CS 27: *ʿnṭiṭiʿ*. [11] DC 45: *aia aiha*; CS 27: *aia ia aha*. [12] CS 27: *ʔl dam*. [13] DC 45, CS 27: *faraš*. [14] CS 27: *skun*. [15] CS 27: *baṣalah*. [16] DC 45, CS 27: *biqudrat*. [17] CS 27: *akun*. [18] CS 27 omits. [19] DC 45: *filaq*. [20] DC 45: *ʔl narʿanl*; CS 27: *ʔl naqʿan*. [21] DC 45, CS 27: *ʿalah*. [22] CS 27: *m*. [23] DC 45: *pllana*. [24] DC 45 appears to have a false start of *h-* before reading *uʿngiṭiʿ*. [25] CS 27: *ṣudra*. [26] CS 27 omits. [27] DC 45 and CS 27 omit: *lman amṭanpa bhšuka*. [28] Corrected according to DC 45; CS 27: *hšauka*; DC 46 omits.

| | |
|---|---|
| In the name of Allah | بسم الله |
| I have summoned against you, o expelled blood, | عزمت عليك يا أيها الدم الشريد |
| By Allah and by the one who removed you | بالله وبالذي اخرجك |
| from the male loins, | من فرج الذكر |
| and be still as night and day are still. | واسكن كما سكن الليل والنهار |
| Be still by the right of the Lord | اسكن بحق رب |
| in whose name the camel-saddles are tightened | الذي علقت باسمه الأكوار |
| Be cut off, O blood, | انقطع يا أيها الدم |
| From the loins of PN, | من فرج ههههههه |
| Be still by the light of Allah. | اسكن بنور الله |
| Be still by the majesty of Allah, | اسكن بجلال الله |
| Be still by the might of Allah, | اسكن بقدرة الله |
| Be still by the one who split the sea for Moses, | اسكن بمن فلق البحر لموسى |
| and extinguished the fire from Abraham the beloved, | وأطفأ النار عن ابراهيم الخليل |
| Peace be upon him | عليه السلام |
| Be still from PN, | اسكن من فلانة |
| And be cut off, O blood, a thousand-fold. | وانقطع يا دم بألف |
| “And there is no power and no strength | ولا حول ولا قوة |
| other than in Allah, the Exulted, | إلا بالله العلي |
| the Mighty”. | العظيم |

[Mandaic rubric:]
This prescription, write on a tunic around the loins for one who is impure by menstruation. There will be relief and healing for this menstruation.

## Notes

5–6. *ladia ʿalaqt bismah ʿl akuar*. The interpretation of this line is very uncertain. For ههههه *ladia*, DC 45 reads ههههه *laria* and DC 46 ههههه *ladai*. Our interpretation of this line follows a suggestion from Prof. R. Forster.

## 2.0. Some parallels in Arabic script

While we have not found in the Arabic magic books at our disposal texts that provide exact parallels of the Mandaean sources, several of the formulae are closely paralleled by formulae in published books or found over the years on the internet, and it is reasonable to assume that texts such as those we publish here will be identified by other scholars. The following two examples have been identified in books.

### 2.1. Parallel 1

| | |
|---|---|
| *ḥskh ḥskh ḥskh* | حسكه حسكه حسكه |
| Be cut off, O dark blood, | انقطع أيها الدم الدعام |
| just as mercy was cut off from the elders of the town quarters | كما انقطعت الرحمة عن مشايخ الحارات |
| and the heads of the villages[14] | ورؤساء القرى. |

(al-Māliki, *Treasure*, 62)[15]

### 2.2. Parallel 2

| | |
|---|---|
| You should write on the front of the garment of a person whose blood or tears do not stop and the back of the garment:[16] | تكتب على مقدم ثوب من لا يتوقف دمه أو دمعا ومؤخر الثوب: |
| *fqj mḫmt bṭd zhj wʾḥ,* | فقج مخمت بطد زهج واح |

[14] I.e., just as no mercy may be found with them.

[15] An early twentieth-century collection.

[16] The structure of these instructions is opaque, and it is not clear if the same spell is written on both the front and back of the shirt.

| | |
|---|---|
| Be cut off, O blood from PN (M) or PN (F), | انقطع أيها الدم عن فلان. أو فلانة. |
| just as mercy was cut off | كما اتقطعت الرحمة |
| from the slaughterer of the cattle | عن ذابح البقر |
| and the cutter of trees, | وقاطع الشجر |
| by the right of ʾĀhya Šar ʾĀhya ʾĀdūnay ʾAṣbāʾut ʾĀl Šadāy. | بحق آهيا شراهيا آدوناي أصباؤت آل شداي. |
| Finished and completed, | تم وكمل |
| And Allah is all-knowing. | والله أعلم. |

(Al-Rammāl, *Bounty*, 205.)

During the course of our initial research, we also encountered similar texts posted to Arabic chat groups on the internet. Unfortunately, the sites are no longer active. Nonetheless, we present the texts here as they were recorded by us in 2011:

## 2.3. Parallel 3

| | |
|---|---|
| In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful | بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لقطع |
| To cut off blood, Allah be willing. | الدم باذن الله |
| On the authority of the king in heaven whose name is blood | عن ملك في السماء اسمه الدم |
| and who rode on a horse of blood | وركب على خيل من الدم |
| with a sword of blood in his hand, | وفي يده سيف من الدم |
| striking blood with blood. | ويضرب الدم بالدم |
| Be cut off, O blood. | انقطع ايها الدم |
| Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest | الله اكبر الله اكبر الله اكبر |
| and he struck a dry path for them in the sea. | وضرب لهم طريقا في البحر ييسا |
| Dry up, O blood, | ايبس ايها الدم |

| | |
|---|---|
| by the glory of the God of the Throne. | بعزة اله العرش |
| "And there is no power and no strength other than in Allah, the Exulted, the Mighty" | ولا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العظيم |

## 2.4. Parallel 4

| | |
|---|---|
| In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful | بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم |
| May Allah pray for our lord Muḥammad | وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد |
| and for his family and companions, and may he be well. | وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم |
| To cut off bleeding immediately | لقطع نزيف الدم في الحال |
| recite 7 times: | تقول 7 مرا |
| Send down[17] a king of blood | نزل ملكاً من دم |
| on a horse of blood | على فرساً من دم |
| with a sword of blood in his hand, | بيده حربتاً من دم |
| striking blood with blood. | يضرب الدم بالدم |
| Be cut off, O blood. | أنقطع أيها الدم |
| and dry up from PN son of PN | وايبس عن فلان بن فلانه |
| as the sea dried up for our lord Moses, | كما يبس البحر لسيدنا موسى |
| peace be upon him | عليه السلام |
| You should breathe into the wound after each time | تنفث في الجرج[18] بعد كل مرة |
| that you read the incantation until it is completed | تقرأ العزيمه حتى تتم |
| 7 times. | 7 مرات. |

[17] The case of the following word, ملكاً, indicates that نزل in this text is construed as transitive, and we accordingly interpret it as the II-stem imperative. In the Mandaean transcriptions, the spellings *nazal* (Texts 1:1, 2:2, 2:3,) and *nizal* (Text 4:2) indicate that they read the verbs as I-stem.

[18] *Sic*. We take it to be a typing error for الجرح 'the wound'.

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# DOTS AND WORD STRESS IN CLASSICAL EAST SYRIAC*

*Johan Lundberg*

What was the dominant stress pattern in Late Classical Syriac? The treatment of word stress in grammars of Classical Syriac is often very brief and the same is true for Knudsen's (2015) recent monograph on Syriac phonology. There are some good reasons for the brevity of these treatments. For example, while the Syriac scribes devised an elaborate system of dots, they did not create signs specifically designed to mark stressed syllables—in contrast to the Greek accents or the Hebrew cantillation marks. Equally important, the Syriac grammarians, like their Arabic counterparts, did not discuss general stress patterns (Knudsen 2015, 171).

Nöldeke mentions that East Syriac stressed the penultimate syllable, and they did so distinctly. By contrast, he notes that the Maronites stressed either the ultimate or the penultimate syllable. The ultimate syllable was stressed if it was closed, while the penultimate syllable was stressed if the ultimate syllable was open (Nöldeke 2001, §56; cf. Brockelmann 1960, 48; Muraoka 1997, 16). Nöldeke (2001, §56) also mentions that Aramaic

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stressed the final syllable at an earlier time (cf. Muraoka 1997, 16). Duval, referring to Stoddard's grammar, mentions that North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic dialects are characterised by penultimate stress. He thought that the same pattern applied to ancient Syriac, suggesting that the ultimate syllable received stress only in monosyllabic words or when this syllable was closed and had an originally long vowel (e.g., ܟܬܰܒ *kθav* and ܡܰܠܟܺܝ *malkin*). Following this line of reasoning, Duval makes a few suggestions: (1) that the prefixes of most prefix conjugation forms were stressed, e.g., ܢܶܩܛܽܘܠ *néqṭol* and ܢܶܒܒܽܘܙ *nébboz*; (2) that the antepenultimate syllable could be stressed if an epenthetic vowel was added, thereby making the word trisyllabic (e.g., *déḥelθå* < *déḥlθå* 'fear'). Similarly, the stress remained on the ultimate syllable when an epenthetic vowel was added to suffix conjugation forms: ܝܬܺܒ *iθév* 'he sat'. Duval (1881, 135–37) also mentions that Greek words retained their accents when they were borrowed into Syriac. Knudsen's (2015, 171) discussion of word stress is centred around two types of evidence: (1) the reduction of the first vowel in originally disyllabic words such as ܕܡܐ (*dmå* < **damåʾ*) and ܒܪܐ (*brå* < **biråʾ*); and (2) the dominance of ultimate stress in other Aramaic dialects, especially Jewish dialects. Based on these observations he suggests that ultimate stress was the dominant stress pattern in Late Classical Syriac.

Knudsen mentions some exceptions to this pattern, notably imperatives with pronominal suffixes. He suggests that ܫܡܰܥܝ *šmáʿayn* 'listen to me' was stressed on the penultimate syllable */šma/*. This conclusion is based on the presence of the stem

vowel, which should otherwise have been reduced. The same applies to other imperative forms, all taken from BL Add. 12138 (Knudsen 2015, 172–73):

(1) ܗܒ݂ *háven* ‘give’ (FP) (fol. 240r, ln. 16 = Matt. 25.28)
(2) ܘܥܕ݂ *ʿéddeh* ‘make it’ (fol. 4r, lns 9, 11, 13 = Gen. 6.14–16)
(3) ܫܡ݂ܥ݂ *šmáʿayn* ‘listen to us’ (fol. 10r, ln. 12 = Gen. 23.6)
(4) ܣܥ݂ܝ݂ *sayyéxeh* ‘complete it’ (fol. 4r, ln. 12 = Gen. 6.16)
(5) ܐ݂ܦ݂ܩ *appéqeh* ‘take her away’ (fol. 9v, ln. 7 = Gen 21.10); ܐ݂ܦ݂ܩ *appéqayn* ‘take me out’ (fol. 19r, ln. 21 = Gen. 40.14)
(6) ܫ݂ܕ݂ *šaddárayn* ‘send me’ (fol. 14r, ln. 1 = Gen. 30.25); ܫ݂ܕ݂ ‘send me’ (fol. 15v, ln. 10 = Gen. 30.25); ܫ݂ܕ݂ ‘send us’ (fol. 243r, ln. 12 = Mark 5.12)

In short, the stem vowels in these forms were preserved because they occurred in stressed syllables.

Knudsen’s discussion of stress patterns ends at this point but if we take a closer look at these verbal forms in Add. 12138, we should note the large dots above the consonant that precedes the stressed vowel. These dots were made with either black or red ink. *Båbai*, who compiled Add. 12138, mentions that black dots go back to the readings of the *maqryåne*—teachers who taught students how to read the Bible—while red dots indicate an alternative reading belonging to Rabban *Råmišoʿ* (Loopstra 2014, II:VIII–X). The Syriac grammarians called these dots *påqodå* ‘imperative.’ This name was originally used to describe dots above imperatives and volitive prefix conjugation forms. Segal writes that this dot is placed above the first letter of the word, unless that letter is vowelless, in which case it is placed above the second letter (Segal 1953, 87).

Why was it necessary to place this dot above a consonant followed by a vowel? Equally, why is there a large dot above the second letter in (5) ܐܦܩܝ *appéqeh* ‘take her away’, even though the first letter is followed by a vowel? The simple answer to both questions is that this dot marks rising pitch, a rise in pitch which falls on the syllable that often carries the nuclear stress of the clause.

## 1.0. Marking Rising Pitch

The large dots above the imperatives in (1)–(6) primarily indicate rising pitch. This function is clearly shown by similar dots above interjections, notably the three monosyllabic interjections ܗܵ *hǻ* ‘behold’, ܘ݂ *wáy* ‘woe’, and ܐ݂ *éw* ‘well done’. Interjections are, crosslinguistically, closely associated with rising pitch. So it is very likely that the dots—above the first letters of these interjections—indicate such a rise in pitch (cf. Segal 1953, 87). By contrast, when *hå* is used in the phrase *lå hå* ‘is it not’ at the beginning of polar questions with positive polarity, it does not function as an interjection and, consequently, does not have a dot above the first letter.

(7) ܗܘܿܐ ܒ݂ ܫܡܝ ܗܵ
‘And behold, a voice from heaven…’ (Matt. 3.17)

(8) ܠ݂ ܗܵ ܟ݂ܝ ܡ݂ ܟ݂ܘܼܠ ܒ݂ ܗܵ ܢ݂ܚ̈ܐ
‘Do not the tax collectors do the same?’ (Matt. 5.46)

Since these interjections are monosyllabic, the dots do not primarily mark stress. However, because they indicate a rising pitch contour, they are placed above the consonant which precedes the nucleus of the stressed syllable. This secondary function is corroborated by the writings of the early West Syriac grammarians.

## 2.0. The Position of Dots and Word Stress

Some of the early grammatical treatises contain comments about a dot called ܡܩܠܫܢܐ *mqalšånå* or ܓܪܘܪܝܐ *gårorå*. Jacob of Edessa (Phillips 1869, 22–23) writes that this dot is called ܦܪܟܣܝܛܘܢܐ *paraxetånås* in Greek. The Greek word παροξύτονος is used for words with an acute accent on the penultimate syllable, the word itself being derived from the term for the ultimate syllable ὀξύτονος (Montanari et al. 2015). Two other treatises, one anonymous and one ascribed to Thomas the Deacon, mention that some grammarians thought that the term ܓܪܘܪܝܐ *gårorå* should be reserved for the dot above the */h/* in the name ܝܗܘܕܐ *ihúdå* 'Judas, Judah', i.e., the dot above the consonant that precedes the nucleus of the penultimate syllable.[1] These writers connect it with the Greek term for the acute accent (ὀξύς), and suggest that *gårorå* has three positions: above the ultimate, the penultimate, or the antepenultimate syllable (Phillips 1869, 83–84). It is not surprising, then, that the large dots above imperatives are placed above the consonant that precedes the nucleus of a stressed syllable.

## 3.0. Loanwords

In Vat sir. 273 large dots are used above some Greek loanwords and proper nouns. For example, in Matthew 22 the word ܩܨܪ *qésår* 'Caesar' is used four times and three of these have a large dot above the first letter (Matt. 22.17, 21). This dot is significant

[1] This suggests that the Syriac proper noun ܝܗܘܕܐ *ihúdå* 'Judas, Judah' was borrowed from Hebrew via Greek into Syriac, since it agrees with the Greek stress pattern (Ἰούδας).

because the Greek word is accented on the penultimate syllable (*καῖσαρ*). Similarly, the loan words ܐܢܢܩܐ *ånnq̊e* ‘necessity’ (Matt. 18.7) and ܠܦܪܛܘܪܝܢ *la-praṭóren* ‘pretorium’ (Matt. 27.27) have a large dot above the same syllable as the respective Greek words *ἀνάγκη* and *πραιτώριον*. Another relevant word is ܐܘܫܥܢܐ *ošaʿnå̊* ‘hosanna’ (Matt. 21.9), which has a large dot above the */n/* corresponding to the Greek accent which is placed above the last syllable (*ὡσαννὰ*). There are also several additional proper nouns that have a dot above the syllable which corresponds to the accented syllable in their Greek counterparts (see Table 1, facing page). While discussing the stress patterns of Greek loanwords in Syriac, Butts (2016, 94–95) mentions two possible traces of Greek accents: the occasional use of Syriac */y/* to represent ε, and the occasional apocopation of unaccented word-final α. Both might indicate that Greek loanwords retained the stress pattern of their Greek counterparts. The correspondence between Syriac dots and Greek accents suggests that at least some loanwords retained the Greek stress pattern. For purposes of this article, the correspondence between dots and accents adds weight to the argument that some dots were placed above the consonant which preceded the nucleus of the stressed syllable.

Table 1

| Syriac | Transliteration | Greek | Proper noun | References (Matt.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ܗܪܘܕܝܣ | *heródes* | Ἡρῴδης | Herod | 2.1, 2.7; 14.6[2] |
| ܦܝܠܝܦܘܣ | *pílippos* | Φίλιππος | Philip | 10.3[3] |
| ܐܪܟܠܝܘܣ | *arkéleʾos* | Ἀρχέλαος | Archelaeus | 2.22 |
| ܐܢܕܪܝܐܘܣ | *åndréʾos* | Ἀνδρέας | Andrew | 4.18; 10.2[4] |
| ܦܝܠܛܘܣ | *pilā̊ṭos* | Πιλᾶτος | Pilate | 27.24, 58, 58, 62 |

## 4.0. Word Stress and Word Classes

The following sections take a closer look at large dots like the ones used above imperatives. Most of the data comes from the seventh-century East Syriac manuscript Vat. sir. 273, specifically the gospel of Matthew. I have also consulted the eastern Masoretic manuscript BL Add. 12138, which Knudsen used extensively. The distribution of these dots suggest that some word classes were stressed on the first syllable while other word classes were stressed on the penultimate syllable.

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[2] This name is the most common of those in the table. The three references in the table have a dot above the second letter, or the following vowel letter (ܘ). Some of the other attestations have a dot above the first letter (Matt. 2.3, 16, 22; 14.3; 22.12). The placement of these dots may indicate an alternative stress pattern, although there is limited space above the letter ܗ.

[3] There is a dot above the first letter of this name in Add. 12138, but no dot in Vat. sir. 273. The latter has a dot above the first letter of the name in Luke 6.14.

[4] The large dot is placed between the */d/* and the */r/* in both examples.

## 4.1. Interrogative Words

Interrogative words are characterised by a large dot above one of the letters, typically the first consonant followed by a vowel. In his chapter about East Syriac accents, Segal (1953, 86) notes that this dot—called *mša'lånå*—is placed above the stressed syllable.[5]

The interrogatives in (9) and (10), *man* 'who' and *manu* 'who is', respectively, have a large dot above the first letter: ܡ̣ *mán*, ܡ̣ܢܘ *mánu*—the former also has a diacritic dot indicating that the word should be read as *man* rather than the preposition *men* 'from'. These large dots are not used in non-interrogative constructions, e.g., ܡ (Matt. 10.14), ܡܢܘ (Matt. 10.11):

(9) ܡ̣ ܗܢܘܢ ܐܡܝ ܘܡ̣ ܗܢܘܢ ܐܚܝ.
'Who is my mother and who are my brothers?' (Matt. 12.48)

(10) ܡ̣ܢܘ ܡܢܟܘܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܪ̈ܥܐ ܡ̣ܐܐ ܒܚܕ ܘܢܦܠ ܒܫܒܬܐ ܠܒܪ ܡ̣ܢ ܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܢܐܚܕ ܒܗ ܘܢܩܝܡ ܠܗ.
'Who of you is a man who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, he does not take hold of it and pull it out?' (Matt. 12.11)

Similarly, when the interrogative words *må* and *månå* are used in questions, a large dot is placed above the initial letter: ܡ̣ܢܐ *må̈nå* and ܡ̣ܐ *må̈*:

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[5] This observation may indicate that Segal thought that interrogatives were stressed on the first syllable—which is where we find the dots in his examples—but he does not mention that these words were stressed on the first syllable. Moreover, he does not discuss stress patterns more broadly, or the relationship between large dots and stress patterns in other word classes.

(11) ܥܠ ܠܒܘܫܐ ܡܢܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܕܡܬܚܫܒ ܥܠܝܗ.
'Regarding clothes, what are you anxious of?' (Matt. 6.28)

(12) ܠܢ ܡܢ ܠܢ ܐܢܬ ܝܕܥ ܠܗ.
'To us, what is it to us? You know it.' (Matt. 27.4)

When a preposition is prefixed to *mån̈å* the large dot remains above the first letter of the interrogative word: ܒܡܢܐ *bmån̈å* in (13) and ܠܡܢܐ *lmån̈å* (Matt. 15.3).

(13) ܐܢܐ ܒܦܪܫ ܫܐܕ ܒܥܠ ܙܒܘܒ ܒܡܢܐ ܒܢܝܟܘܢ ܡܦܩܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ.
'If I cast out demons by Beelzebub; your sons, by whom do they cast them out?' (Matt. 12.27)

When the pronouns *áynå*, *áydå*, and *áylen* 'which' are used as interrogatives, there is a large dot above the first letter: ܐܝܢܐ *áynå* in (14), ܐܝܕܐ *áydå* (Mark 2.9), ܐܝܠܝܢ *áylen* (Matt. 19.18). These three are also frequently used as the head of a relative clause, as in (15), and then a large dot is not used. When a preposition is prefixed to these interrogatives, the dot remains above the first letter: ܠܐܝܢܐ *láynå* 'to which' (Matt. 22.28) and ܒܐܝܢܐ *báynå* 'by which':

(14) ܡܢܗܘ ܕܪܒܐ ܒܢܡܘܣܐ ܐܝܢܐ.
'Which is the greatest commandment in the law?' (Matt. 22.36)

(15) ܒܡܢ ܫܠܝܛ ܐܢܬ ܥܒܕ ܐܠܝܢ ܐܝܟܢܐ.
'By whose authority are you doing these?' (Matt. 21.23)

The word *áykå* 'where' is used in two different contexts. In (16) it is used as an interrogative word, and it has a large dot above the first letter: ܐܝܟܐ *áykå*. In (17) it is used as the head of a relative clause. Consequently, *aykå* is written without the large dot.

When the copula is added to the interrogative, the large dot remains above the first letter: ܐܝܟܐ *áykaw*.[6] The dot also remains above the first letter when a preposition or the subordinating particle *d-* is prefixed: ܠܐܝܟܐ *láykå* (18) and ܕܐܝܟܐ *dáyka* (Matt. 2.4).[7]

(16) ܐܝܟܐ ܨܒܐ ܐܢ ܢܬܟܠ ܦܨܚܐ ܠܟ ܬܪܝܨ ܗܘ ܐܝܟܐ
'Where do you want us to prepare the Passover?' (Matt. 26.17)

(17) ܐܝܟܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܟ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܓܙܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܬܡܢ ܐܦ ܠܒܟ ܢܗܘܐ
'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' (Matt. 6.21)

(18) ܐܝܟܐ ܡܪܝ
'Where, Lord?' (Luke 17.37)

The word *áymekkå* 'from where, how', like *áykå*, can be used as an interrogative, the head of a relative clause (Luke 11.24), and in indirect questions. When it is used as an interrogative, a large dot is placed above the initial letter, otherwise no dot is used.

(19) ܡܢܐ ܐܝܬ ܗܘ ܐܝܟܐ ܕܣܢܐ ܒܗ.
'From where are the weeds in it?' (Matt. 13.27)

(20) ܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܐ ܐܝܟܐ ܐܢܬ ܗܘ ܘܡܢ ܐܬ.
'I do not know where you are from.' (Luke 13.25, 27)

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[6] Note the presence of a dot above the non-interrogative *aykaw* in John 11.57.

[7] Matt. 2.4 may be an indirect question: 'He asked them where the Messiah is to be born.' The presence of the large dot, however, is probably an indication that this was read as direct speech: 'He asked them: "Where is the Messiah to be born?"

The word *aykannå* ‘how’ is used as an interrogative and—together with the clitic *d*—it is used to introduce manner or purpose clauses (*aykannå d-* ‘just as, so that’). In (21) it is used as an interrogative, and it has a large dot above the first letter of the word: ܐ̇ܝܟܢܐ *áykannå*. Dots are not used in non-interrogative constructions. Similarly, the shorter interrogative ܐ̇ܝܟ *áykan* in (22) has a large dot above the first letter.

(21) ܐ̇ܝܟܢܐ ܐܢܬ ܕܒܝܫܐ ܡܠܠ ܛܒ̈ܐ ܡܢ ܕܒܝܫ̈ܐ ܠܡܡܠܠ
‘How are you who are evil able to say good things?’ (Matt. 12.34)

(22) ܐ̇ܝܟ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ̈ܝܢ ܐܢܬ ܕܠܐ ܥܠ ܠܚܡ̈ܐ ܡܠܝܬ ܠܟ
‘How do you not understand that I did not speak to you about bread?’ (Matt. 16.11)

The interrogative word *kmå* ‘how much’ also has two functions. When used in variable questions, a single dot is placed above the second letter ܟ̣ܡܐ *kmå̊*, as in (23) (cf. Matt. 6.23; 7.11). In (24) this word is used in a polar question, but it does not have an interrogative function, and there is consequently no dot above the second letter.

(23) ܟ̣ܡܐ ܠܚܡ̈ܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ
‘How many loaves do you have?’ (Matt. 15.34)

(24) ܡܟܠ ܒܢ̈ܝ ܚܕܪܐ ܟ̣ܡܐ ܕܥܡ̈ܗܘܢ ܚܬܢܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܥܕܡܐ ܕܥܡ̈ܗܘܢ ܗܘ ܚܬܢܐ
‘Can the wedding guests fast as long as the bridegroom is with them?’ (Matt. 9.15)

The word *emmaθ* can be used as an interrogative or as a temporal conjunction (together with *d-*). It is used as an interrogative in (25), and a large dot is placed above the first letter: ܐ̇ܡܬܝ *émmaθ*. In (26) this word is combined with *ʿdammå* ‘until’, and a large

dot is placed above the third letter of *ʿdammå*: ܥܕܡܐ ܕܡܐ *ʿdammå̊ lemmaθ*. Duval (1881, 136) mentions *ʿdammå̊* as one of the words which retained stress on the ultimate syllable, something which is visible through the geminated */m/*. In Vat sir. 273 and Add. 12138 this stressed syllable is marked with a large dot.

(25) ܘܡܝܬ ܚܙܝܢܟ ܓܝܪ ܐܘ ܡܬܝ ܐܝ

the stress patterns of interrogative words in the Neo-Aramaic dialect of Christian Urmi (Khan 2016, I:246–47).

## 4.2. Demonstratives

Demonstratives, like interrogative words, often have a large dot above the first letter: ܗܘ̇ *hǒw* and ܗܝ̇ *hǒy* 'that', ܗܢ̇ܘܢ *hǒnon* and ܗܢ̇ܝܢ *hǒnen* 'those', ܗܢ̇ܐ *hǒnå* and ܗܕ̇ܐ *hǒδe* 'this', ܗܠ̇ܝܢ *hǒlen* 'these'. The large dots are typically placed above a focused demonstrative. In (27) two dots signal that the demonstrative is a focused constituent: the dot above the first letter marks rising pitch on the stressed syllable, and the dot below the last letter marks a falling pitch contour at the end of a prosodic phrase, indicating that the demonstrative is fronted.

(27) ܗܕܐ ܒܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܫܡܝܢ ܗܢ̣ܘ̇
'…this one, will be called the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' (Matt. 5.19)

The position of the large dots above the first letter of these demonstratives indicates that they were stressed on the first syllable, like interrogative words. The same pattern applies to ܗ̇ܘ̇ *húyu* 'He is, this is' (Matt. 11.14; 12.50; 15.18; 26.48).

## 4.3. *Håyden, håxannå,* and *meddem*

The words ܗ̇ܝܕܝܢ *hǒyden* 'then', ܗ̇ܟܢܐ *hǒxannå* 'thus', and ܡ̇ܕܡ *méddem* 'something' exhibit similar dotting patterns—each has a dot above the first consonant, indicating that they were stressed on the first syllable.

## 4.4. Adverbial particles

Large dots are placed above the adverbs ܠܥܠܡ *l-ʿå̊lam* ‘forever’ (Matt. 6.13; 21.19), ܗܫܬ *hå̊šå* ‘now’ (Matt. 9.18; 26.64, 65), and ܝܘܡܢܐ *yawmå̊nå* ‘today’ (Matt. 6.30; 16.3). Since the large dots are placed above the consonant which precedes the nucleus of the penultimate syllable, these adverbs were stressed on the penultimate syllable. This pattern corresponds to the stress pattern of adverbial particles in the Neo-Aramaic dialects of Christian Barwar and Christian Urmi, although some particles are stressed on the antepenultimate syllable in the modern dialects (Khan 2008, I:131–32; 2016, I:231).

## 4.5. Verbal forms

The discussion of large dots began with imperatives. Now we return to verbal forms to consider what they tell us about East Syriac stress patterns.

### 4.5.1. Imperatives

The Syriac grammarians called the large dots above imperatives and volitive prefix conjugation forms *påqodå* ‘command’ or ‘imperative’. Interestingly, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, dots are only rarely placed above imperatives. They are primarily used with weak verbs: four out of the nine attestations in the corpus have only two consonants (see Table 2, facing page).

Table 2

| **Verb** | **Reference (Matt.)** | **Verb** | **Reference (Matt.)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| ܙܠ *zél* 'go' (PL) | 28.19 | ܗܒ *háv 'give'* | 18.28; 20.8 |
| ܙܝܠܝܢ *zélen* 'go (FP)' | 28.7, 10 | ܗܒܝܢ *háven* 'give (PL)' | 25.8 |
| ܐܡܪܝܢ *emmáren* 'say (FP)' | 28.7 | ܕ݁ܝܬܒ *d-θév* 'sit' | 22.44; 26.36 |
| ܬܐ *tắ* 'come' | 9.18 | ܛܪ *ṭắr* 'keep' | 19.17 |
| ܬܝܢ *tắyen* 'come' | 28.6 | ܥܕܪܝܢ *'addárayn* 'help me' | 15.25 |
| ܘܙܒܝܢ *wa-zbénen* 'give (FP)' | 25.9 | ܦܣܘܩ *psóqe* 'cut' | 18.8 |
| ܐܙܕܗܪ *ezdáhhar* 'take care' | 16.6 | | |

Moreover, the large dots which are placed above these imperatives are only sporadically used with weak verbs. For example, the 2MP form ܐܙܕ݁ܗܪ *ezdáhhar* is attested six times in the gospel of Matthew, but only one has a large dot. Similarly, the 2MS form ܬܐ *tắ* is used seven times, but only one of these has a large dot above the first letter. For a dot which is called 'command' or 'imperative', the usage seems rather inconsistent. This inconsistency, however, is understandable if we assume that the large dot primarily indicates rising pitch, not the imperative mood of the verb. In several cases there appears to be an urgency to these commands. In Matt. 9.18 Jairus tells Jesus: 'My daughter has just died but COME (ܬܐ *tắ*) and put your hand on her and she will live.' In Matt. 15.25 the Canaanite woman says: 'Lord, HELP ME! (ܥܕܪܝܢ *'addárayn*)', because her daughter is demon possessed. Similarly, the servant in Matt. 18.28 is furiously choking the other servant when he says: 'GIVE (ܗܒ *háv*) me what you owe me.' Contextually, it makes sense that these verbs are read with higher pitch.

In monosyllabic imperatives the dots are placed above the consonant that precedes the nucleus of the only syllable. In disyllabic and trisyllabic forms, the dot is placed above the consonant that precedes the nucleus of the penultimate syllable. If these dots

indicate a rising pitch contour on the stressed syllable, these dotting patterns suggest that imperatives with more than one syllable were stressed on the penultimate syllable. If so, it means that Classical East Syriac had a different stress pattern than most North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic dialects, which typically stress the first syllable of the imperative, irrespective of how many syllables the word contains (Khan 2008, I:129; 2016, I:229).

### 4.5.2. Prefix Conjugation Forms

The gospels contain several prefix conjugation verbs with a volitive function. Some of these verbal forms have a large dot above the first letter. The verb ܢܶܥܫܰܡ *néšmaʿ* (Matt. 11.15; 13.9; Luke 1.60) is a particularly good example, because volitive and non-volitive forms of this verb occur in the same sentence:

(28) ܡܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܐܕܢ̈ܐ ܕܫܡܝܥ ܢܶܥܫܰܡ
'Whoever has ears to listen, SHOULD LISTEN.' (Matt. 11.15)

Other examples include: ܬܶܗܘܶܐ *téθe* (Matt. 6.9), ܢܶܗܘܶܐ *néhwe* (Matt. 6.10; 15.28; 20.26, 27; 23.11; 26.42), ܐܶܗܦܘܟ *éhpox* (Matt. 12.44), ܢܶܙܕܩܦ *nézdqep* (Matt. 27.22, 23), ܢܶܚܫܘ *néḥḥoθ* (Matt. 27.42), ܢܶܣܒ *néssav* (Matt. 22.24), ܢܶܣܬܟܠ *néstakkal* (Matt. 24.15), ܢܶܦܩ *néspaq* (Matt. 19.12), ܢܶܥܒܕ *néʿbeδ* (Matt. 17.4), ܢܶܥܒܪ *néʿbran* (Matt. 26.39), ܢܶܩܕܰܫ *néθqaddaš* (Matt. 6.9), ܢܶܦܪܩܘ *néprqiw* (Matt. 27.43), ܢܶܫܩܘ *néšqol* (Matt. 16.24).

There are also some examples where a large dot is placed above another letter. For example, in Matt. 16.9 a large dot is placed above the second letter of the verb in Vat. sir. 273 and between the second and third letter in Add. 12138 (ܢܶܗܘܶܐ *néhwe* or ܢܶܗܘ̈ *nehwé*), indicating either penultimate or ultimate stress. Less

transparent examples include: ܢܶܒ̈ܒܘܙ *nébboz* or *nebbóz* (Matt. 12.29 [2x]), ܐ̈ܶܐ *eθé* (Matt. 8.19), and ܢܶܥ̈ܩܛܶܠ *neštqél* (Matt. 25.29). The last two have a large dot above the ultimate syllable. This may indicate that non-volitive forms had ultimate stress.

What do these patterns tell us about Classical East Syriac words stress? At the very least, they indicate that volitive prefix conjugation forms were stressed on the initial syllable, irrespective of how many syllables the verb contained. Did the stress pattern of these volitive forms differ from that of other prefix conjugation forms? This is certainly possible, but it is difficult to prove, since so few forms have dots above a letter other than the first.

### 4.5.3. Suffix Conjugation Forms

The examples in this category are primarily 3FS, 2MP, and 1SG forms, verbal forms with more than one syllable. In (29) a large dot is placed above the negation *lå*, rather than one of the syllables of the verb. This combination of dots, especially the dot above the negation, is used because this is a biased polar question with reverse polarity. These questions have a very similar dotting pattern as variable questions, placing a dot above one of the first constituents in the clause—much like the dot above interrogative words.

(29) ܠ̈ܵ ܩܪ̈ܝܬ̣ܘܢ

‘Have you not read…?’ (Matt. 12.3; cf. 12.5; 19.4)

In many Neo-Aramaic dialects, the negator is part of the same stress group as the verb and the default position of the stress is on the negator (Khan 2016, I:235–36) The large dot above the

negator is probably an indication that the same was true in Classical East Syriac: *lå̊-qrayton*. Other instances of a large dot include:

Table 3

| Verb | Reference (Matt.) | Verb | Reference (Matt.) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3MS forms** | | | |
| ܘܥܡܪ *w-émmar* | 27.54 | ܘܥܠ *w-ʿál* | 26.58 |
| ܠܐ ܐܬܝܠܕ *lå̊ eθiled* | 26.24 | | |
| **3FS forms** | | | |
| ܐܡܪܬ *émraθ* | 15.25; 15.27 | ܩܪܒܬ *qérbaθ* | 10.7; 12.28; 20.20; 26.7, 29 |
| ܕܥܪܡܝܬ *d-ármyaθ* | 26.12 | ܪܩܕܬ *ráqdaθ* | 14.6 |
| ܚܫܟܬ *ḥéškaθ* | 14.23 | ܫܠܝܠܬ *šélḥaθ* | 27.19 |
| ܝܥܒܬ *yévšaθ* | 21.19 | ܫܠܝܬ *šélyaθ* | 14.32 |
| ܘܟܐܪܬ *w-kéraθ* | 14.9; 17.23; 18.31; 26.22 | ܫܦܪܬ *šépraθ* | 14.6 |
| ܡܝܬܐ *miθáθ* | 22.27 | ܬܪܨܬ *térṣaθ* | 8.32 |
| ܢܦܩܬ *népqaθ* | 15.22 | ܐܬܪܥܬ *eθásyaθ* | 9.22; 15.28 |
| ܢܥܩܬ *néθqaθ* | 8.34 | ܐܬܕܡܝܬ *etdámyaθ* | 22.2 |
| ܣܥܕܬ *séʕdaθ* | 15.25; 20.20 | ܐܬܙܝܬ *ettzíyaθ* | 27.51 |
| ܣܡܩܬ *sémqaθ* | 16.2 | ܐܫܬܥܬ *eštámʿaθ* | 28.14 |
| ܩܡܐ *qå̊maθ* | 8.15 | | |
| **1SG forms** | | | |
| ܐܙܙ *w-ézzeθ* | 25.25 | ܢܛܪ *nétreθ* | 19.22 |
| ܘܕܗܠ *w-déḥleθ* | 25.25 | ܢܦܩ *népqeθ* | 12.44 |
| ܚܫܫ *ḥeššéθ* | 27.19 | ܫܥܩ *ševqeθ* | 18.32 |
| ܟܦܢ *képneθ* | 25.35, 42 | | |
| **2MP forms** | | | |
| ܘܐܬܝܬܘܢ *w-eθáyton* | 25.36 | ܘܝܐܒܛܘܢ *w-yávton* | 25.35 |
| ܒܛܠܬܘܢ *baṭélton* | 15.6 | ܐܣܬܟܠܬܘܢ *ʾestakálton* | 16.9 |
| ܕܗܝܡܢܬܘܢ *d-hayménton* | 9.29 | ܕܥܒܕܬܘܢ *da-ʿvádton* | 25.40 |
| ܕܚܙܝܬܘܢ *da-ḥzáyton* | 24.33 | ܫܩܠܬܘܢ *šqálton* | 6.9 |

Almost all these verbal forms are either monosyllabic or stressed on the penultimate syllable. The only exceptions are ܚܫܫܬ *ḥeššéθ*

(Matt. 27.19) and ܡܝܬܐܒ *miθáθ* (Matt. 22.27). These patterns probably indicate that suffix conjugation forms with more than one syllable were stressed on the penultimate syllable.

### 4.5.4. Infinitives

There is only one infinitive with a large dot in the corpus: ܠܡܚܙܐ *l-meḥzé* (Matt. 11.7). Since this dot is placed above the consonant which precedes the nucleus of the ultimate syllable, it may indicate that infinitives—like many nouns—were stressed on the ultimate syllable.

## 4.6. Nouns and Adjectives

Large dots are also placed above nouns. Some of these are placed above the consonant which precedes the nucleus of the first syllable. For example, there is a list of vices in Matt. 15.19: ܓܰܘܪܐ *gǎwrå* ‘adultery’, ܩܛܠܐ *qéṭlå* ‘killing’, ܙܢܝܘܬܐ *zǎnyuθå* ‘fornication’, ܓܢܒܘܬܐ *gánnåvuθå* ‘theft’, ܣܗܕܘܬ ܫܩܪܐ *sǎhduθ šuqrå* ‘false witness’, ܓܘܕܦܐ *gúδåpå* ‘blasphemy’. There are also two instances where a large dot is placed above the first consonant of nouns with a monosyllabic stem: ܐܰܒ *áv-un* (Matt. 6.9), ‘ܥܝܢ-ܐܟ *‘áyn-åx* (Matt. 20.15).[8] In contrast to these nouns, there are several instances where a large dot is placed above the consonant which precedes the nucleus of the last syllable: ܒܝܡܐ *b-yammǎ́* (Matt. 4.18), ܒܢܝܫܐ *bnaynåšǎ́* (Matt. 21.25), ܗܪܒܐ *ḥarbǎ́* (Matt. 10.34),

[8] There are at least two cases where a pronominal suffix is stressed: ܠܚܢ ܒܝܬܗ *la-vnay bayt-éh* ‘sons of his house’ (Matt. 10.25), ܒܩܪܝܬܗ *ba-qriθ-éh* ‘in his field’ (Matt. 13.31).

ܠ݂ܟܗܢܶ *l-kåhné* (Matt. 12.4), ܒ݂ܪ݂ܥ ܗ݂ ܒ݂ *br-eh d-nåšǻ* (Matt. 16.13), ܘ݂ܟ݂ܘ݂ *wa-xθåvǻ* (Matt. 22.20), ܕ݂ܚ݂ *d-ḥayyé* (Matt. 22.32), ܒ݂ܠ݂ܥ݂ *b-ʿelθǻ* (Matt. 23.13), ܦ݂ܝ݂ *peṣḥǻ* (Matt. 26.17). The placement of these large dots may indicate that there was no uniform stress pattern among nouns, but it is also possible that most nouns were stressed on the ultimate syllable in normal speech. The nouns with a dot above the first syllable are part of the same list, and they are also followed by the pausal dot *påsoqå*, indicating that each item is followed by an intonation group boundary.

Large dots are rarely placed above adjectives. Dots are sometimes placed above ܛ݂ܒ݂ *ṭuvå* 'blessed', something which was also mentioned by the early West Syriac grammarians (Phillips 1869, 81): ܛ݂ܒ݂ܝ݂ܟ *ṭúv-ayx* 'you are blessed' (Matt. 16.17) ,ܛ݂ܒ݂ܘ *ṭúv-aw* 'He is blessed' (Matt. 24.46).

## 5.0. Conclusion

Was ultimate or penultimate stress the dominant stress pattern in Classical East Syriac? The large dots used in manuscripts like Vat. sir. 273 and BL Add. 12138 suggest that there may have been several different stress patterns. For example, interrogative words, demonstratives, and interjections were probably stressed on the first syllable, irrespective of the number of syllables in the word—much like these word classes in many North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic dialects. Finite verbs and adverbs were probably stressed on the same syllable as these word classes in modern dialects, i.e., on the penultimate syllable. It is possible that nouns and infinitives were stressed on the ultimate syllable—like nouns

in other Aramaic dialects contemporary with Syriac—but the evidence is inconclusive. Therefore, even if we assume that nouns were stressed on the ultimate syllable, it is difficult to argue that ultimate stress was the dominant pattern in Classical East Syriac. The picture is both more varied and more complex.

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# THE LATE WESTERN ARAMAIC SUFFIXING OF PRONOMINAL DIRECT OBJECTS VIA *-t-* < /yāt/

*Ivri J. Bunis*

In non-targumic Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA) and in Samaritan Aramaic (SA), verbs in the *qṭal* (= suffix) and imperative conjugations and in the infinitive, whose bases end in a long vowel, attach pronominal direct objects almost exclusively by means of *-t-*.[1] This innovative element is commonly explained as reflecting the phonological reduction of the accusative preposition /yāt/. The present article aims to explain the causes for the development of the element *-t-* and its distribution within the verbal system. For this purpose, the comparative method will be employed. The historical morphosyntax of pronominal direct object expression in Jewish texts, such as the Palestinian Talmud and homiletic Midrashim, and Samaritan texts, such as Tibat Marqe and the Samaritan Targum, shall be elucidated within the wider framework of Western Aramaic in its Middle and Late periods, and earlier stages of Aramaic.

[1] Throughout this article, italicised representation of linguistic forms indicates orthography. The infix *-t-* thus represents the letter *tav* or its equivalents, written within an orthographic word.

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The Aramaic language is commonly divided into three dialectal branches, namely, Western, Central, and Eastern Aramaic (Butts 2019, 224–25). I adopt this general division, according to which the dialects employed in Palestine by Jews, Christians, and Samaritans belong to Western Aramaic. I also adopt Fitzmyer's periodisation of Aramaic (1979, 57–84), according to which the Aramaic of the non-targumic JPA and SA belong to Late Aramaic.

## 1.0. Phonologically Reduced /yāt/ + Pronominal Object Suffixes in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic and Samaritan Aramaic

A typical innovation of non-targumic JPA and of SA are verbs which attach their direct object pronoun by means of *-t-*, written together as a single word (1). Nöldeke (1893, 104) suggested that such forms reflect the phonological reduction and coalescence of /yāt/ + pronominal suffix and the preceding verb form (see also Stadel 2011, 239–40), a view which has been widely accepted. Thus, the forms in (1) and (2) derive, respectively, from /*ʾakʿsū yātēh/ and /*nsā yātēh/.

(1) *ʾkʿsw-th*
anger.PRF.3MPL-3MSG
'they angered him' (Samaritan Targum to Deut. 32.16)

(2) *ns-tyh* *w-msr-yh* *l-nmrwd*
take.PRF.3MSG-3MSG and-hand.over.PRF.3MSG-3MSG to-PN
'he took him and handed him over to PN' (Genesis Rabbah, 363)[2]

I stress the orthography of these forms, rather than their morphological status, because it is uncertain whether such single orthographic words reflect fully fledged verbal inflection or orthographic representation of a cliticised, phonologically reduced, yet syntactically independent /yāt/ + pronominal suffix. An exact morphosyntactic interpretation is unnecessary, however, for my present argument. Schulthess (1924, 78–80), followed by Müller-Kessler (1991, 261–62), report the same phenomenon in Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA), a Late Western Aramaic (LWA) used by the Christian community. In the published renditions of the manuscripts, however, the examples provided by Schulthess are written as two separate orthographic words, namely, the verb followed by /yāt/ + pronominal suffix.

## 1.1. Pronominal Direct Object Expression in Non-Targumic Jewish Palestinian Aramaic and Samaritan Aramaic in Wider Perspective

Non-targumic JPA and SA generally prefer to express pronominal direct objects with forms which at the orthographic level occur

[2] Throughout the present article, the text of Genesis Rabbah is cited according to the *Ma'agarim* database of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, http://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/. Pagination is according to Albeck and Theodor (1912–1929).

as single words, rather than periphrastically, by means of a separately written word consisting of the accusative preposition /yāt/ + pronominal suffix. Among such single orthographic words, while the forms with 'bridging *-t-*' may not necessarily reflect fully fledged inflection, other orthographic forms do. In non-targumic JPA, such forms occur in various conjugations, such as *qṭal* (3) and the *yiqṭol* (prefix) conjugation (4).

(3) *w-ḥṭpwn-yh* *mn* *yd-yy*
and-snatch.PRF.3MPL-3MSG from hands-1SG
'and they snatched him form my hands' (y. Berakot 2.3 [5a], Cairo Genizah fragment T-S F 17.6)

(4) *d-yḥzwr* *w-ysbyn-h*
COMP-return.SUBJV.3MSG and-take.SUBJV.3MSG-3FSG
'[…] that he would return and take it' (y. Bava Batra 10.7 [17d])[3]

Verbal inflection in non-targumic SA is also quite frequent (Macuch 1982, 224–36), although perhaps less so than in non-targumic JPA. A quick examination of Tibat Marqe is sufficient to observe that verbal inflection (5) is no less common than the periphrastic construction (6) for the expression of pronominal direct objects.

[3] Throughout this article, unless stated otherwise, citations from the Palestinian Talmud are taken from Codex Leiden as found on the *Maʾagarim* database of the Academy of the Hebrew language, http://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/.

(5) *ʾlyn* *mly-h* *d-qrt-yn* *qdmy-k*
these word.FPL-DEF REL-read.PRF.1SG-3FPL before-2MSG
'these words which I have read before you' (Tibat Marqe, Book One, Tal 2019, 54)

(6) *kmh* *d-ʿbdt* *yt-wn* *qdmy-k*
as comp-do.PRF.1SG do-3MPL before-2MSG
'as I have done them before you' (Tibat Marqe Book One, Tal 2019, 60)

## 1.2. The Distribution of *-t-* + Pronominal Suffix vis-à-vis Other Pronominal Object Attachment Patterns

Bridging *-t-* has a specific distribution in non-targumic JPA and in non-targumic as well as targumic SA, namely, it is almost entirely restricted to the *qṭal*, imperative, and infinitive—specifically, to forms whose bases end in a historical long vowel (Florentin 1991), as examples (1) and (2) illustrate. *Qṭal* verb forms with historically long-vowel-final bases can suffix pronominal direct objects by means other than bridging *-t-*, as seen in *ḥṭpwn-yh* in (3). Yet such forms are less common, especially in SA. Conversely, bridging *-t-* is absent from *qṭal* forms with synchronically consonant-final bases (historically ending with short vowels), such as *msr-yh* in (2), which likely reflects /masrē(h)/. This distribution is paralleled by CPA, where vowel-final *qṭal* forms express pronominal direct objects periphrastically only with /yāt/ + pronominal suffix and not by means of verbal inflection (vowel-final imperative forms with a pronominal direct object are fortuitously unattested in CPA), whereas consonant-final *qṭal* and imperative forms *can* take pronominal object suffixes (Müller-Kessler 1991, 259–62).

The parallelism between the CPA periphrastic construction with /yāt/ and JPA and SA single orthographic words with pronominal object suffixes attached via *-t-* confirms Nöldeke's suggestion that *-t-* developed from /yāt/ through phonological reduction. The phonological reduction of /yāt/ reflected in the orthography *-t-* must have been a development in spoken LWA or its precursors and not in the literary language. Speakers of the precursors to LWA appear to have frequently employed the periphrastic construction with /yāt/ with vowel-final *qṭal*, imperative, and infinitive forms. With such verb forms, the habitual use in speech of the periphrastic construction with /yāt-/ eventually resulted in its phonological reduction and realisation together with the preceding verb form, likely as a single prosodic word.

In contrast with the *qṭal* conjugation, *yiqṭol* forms completely lack object suffixes attached by means of *-t-*. Rather, throughout the *yiqṭol* conjugation in non-targumic JPA (4) and SA (7), as well as in CPA (Müller-Kessler 1991, 260–62), one finds that pronominal suffixes are attached by means of so-called energic *nun*. In JPA and SA, pronominal object suffixes via *-n-* have even been analogically expanded to the infinitive of the *pəʿal* stem (8). The comparative examination below shows the attachment of direct object pronominal suffixes to *yiqṭol* with *-n-* and to consonant-final *qṭal* directly to be a retention of earlier Aramaic morphology, unlike the innovative bridging with *-t-*.

(7) *w-ypsl-nk*
and-disqualify.SUBJV.3MSG-2MSG
'and disqualify you' (JPA) (y. Yevamot 4.13 [6c])

(8) *b-y mpṭḥ-nwn*
in-1SG open.INF-3MPL
'I am able to open them' (SA) (Tibat Marqe, Book One, Tal 2019, 45)

## 2.0. Pronominal Direct Object Expression in Earlier Western Aramaic

The morphosyntax of pronominal direct object expression in non-targumic JPA and in SA is elucidated by a comparison with earlier Aramaic dialects, especially from the Western Aramaic region. First, in Western Aramaic dialects that predate non-targumic JPA and SA, a general preference for expressing pronominal direct objects periphrastically by means of /yāt/ is attested. This overlaps with the use of /yāt/, or its reduced form *-t-* with vowel-final *qṭal*, imperative, and infinitive forms, in SA, non-targumic JPA, and CPA. In the Aramaic of the Targum fragments from the Cairo Geniza, an apparently earlier LWA dialect, pronominal direct objects are in fact never expressed as verbal suffixes, but only periphrastically via /yāt/ (9). The use of periphrasis in example (9) contrasts with the construction in the BH *Vorlage* וּשְׁאֵלְךָ, where the pronominal direct object is inflectional (Fassberg 1990, 252).

(9) *v-yiš'ol* *yat-ak*
and-ask.PRF.3MSG DO-2MSG
'and [he] asks you' (Targum fragment C, to Gen. 32.18; see Fassberg 1990, 15)

Second, unlike the Targum fragments from the Cairo Geniza, in other dialects from the region, the preference for periphrasis is not absolute. Crucially, the uncommon verb forms that do exhibit pronominal object inflection in those dialects are also found in later non-targumic JPA, SA, and CPA.

Three relevant textual sources of Western Aramaic are documented from the earlier Middle Aramaic period, which predates the Aramaic of the Targum fragments.[4] Of these, Qumran Aramaic (QA) shows no apparent constraint on pronominal object inflection (Muraoka 2011, 44–45), but the Aramaic of the Nabataean documents and of the Bar-Kosiba letters shows the above-mentioned preference for /yāt/ + pronominal suffix, insomuch as such limited corpora are instructive. In Nabataean Aramaic (10), ten or so occurrences of /yāt/ + pronominal suffix complement a *yiqṭol* conjugation (8x) or infinitive (2x). Two or three occurrences of a *qṭal* form with pronominal object suffix are found in the Nabataean Aramaic texts within a single document, all within the same phrase (11). The form *ktb-yh* in (11), just like non-targumic JPA *msr-yh* (2), attaches the pronominal suffix directly, to a base without a final long vowel.

[4] On the relative chronologies of Middle and Late Western Aramaic dialects see Fassberg (2010).

(10) *w-lʾ* *ynpq* *yth* *ʾnwš*
and-not take.out.JUSS DO person
'and let no one take him out' (H9.7, Healey 1993, 123)

(11) PN *ʿl* *n*[*pš-h*] *ktb-yh*
PN.MSG on self-3MSG write.PRF.3MSG-3MSG
'PN has written it for himself' (P. Yadin 1.60) (Yadin et al. 2002, 182)

In the Aramaic of the Bar-Kosiba letters we find five occurrences of the periphrastic construction (12) and two with a pronominal object suffix (13), both attached to *yiqṭol* forms by means of so-called energic *nun*.

(12) *w-tqn* *yt-hn*
and-tithe.IMPV.2MSG DO-3FPL
'and tithe them' (P. Yadin 57.4) (Yadin et al. 2002, 326)

(13) *w-mn* *dy* *yṣḥbn-kn*
and-who REL disturb.IMPERF.3MSG-2MPL
'and whoever disturbs you' (P. Yadin 50.7-8) (Yadin et al. 2002, 290)

Despite their limited size, the ratio of /yāt/ + pronominal suffix to verbal inflection in those texts is apparently not incidental. A similar ratio is found in texts in later Western Aramaic, specifically the much larger Samaritan Targum and Targum Neophyti of the Pentateuch. Both Targums, but especially the latter, were composed in dialects very close to the Aramaic of the Targum fragments from the Cairo Geniza, and likewise reflect an early phase of LWA. The Samaritan Targum and Targum Neophyti both show a marked preference for the periphrastic construction, while still documenting verbal inflection in a limited capacity.

Lund (1981, 76, 78), in his syntax of the non-translated passages of Targum Neophyti, which are expansions of the Hebrew Masoretic Text and thus not morphosyntactically dependent on it, reports 74 occurrences of /yāt/ + pronominal suffix (14), and seven of verbal inflection with *qṭal*, showing direct attachment to bases not ending in a long vowel (15) and with *yiqṭol*, showing attachment with *-n-* (16).

(14) *w-šwy* *yt-hwn*
and-put.PRF.3MSG DO-3MPL
'and he put them' (Gen. 28.10)

(15) *d-brk-yh*
that-bless.prf.3MSg-3MSg
'That [he] blessed him' (Gen. 33.14)

(16) *lʾ* *ʾtyb-nʾ* [read*:* *ʾtyb-nh*]
not return.IMPERF.1SG-3MSG
'I shall not return it' (Gen. 44.18)

As noted above, the situation is very similar in CPA (Müller-Kessler 1991, 259), where the periphrastic construction with /yāt-/ (17) dominates, but verbal inflection is still found with *qṭal* attached directly to bases without a final long vowel (18), and with *yiqṭol* attached by means of *-n-* (19).

(17) *w-rwmy-y* *ʾwblw* *yt-h*
and-roman.PL-DEF lead.PRF.3MPL DO-3MSG
'and the Roman soldiers led him' (Mark 15.16, according to Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff 1998, 75)

(18) *w-msr-y* *mr-ʾ*
and-hand.over.PRF.3MSG-1SG lord-DEF
'and the Lord handed me over' (Lam. 1.14, according to Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff 1997, 183)

(19) *yškḥ-nh*
find.IMPERF.3MSG-3MSG
'[he] find him' (Matthew 24.46, according to Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff 1998, 64)

In the categories of *qṭal* with synchronically consonant-final bases and of *yiqṭol*, while the earlier dialects and CPA prefer expressing pronominal direct objects using the periphrastic construction, later non-targumic JPA and SA prefer verbal inflection. Nonetheless, the specific verb forms in both categories, which do show pronominal direct object inflection in the earlier dialects are by and large identical to inflected verb forms found in later non-targumic JPA and SA. All attested *qṭal* forms with pronominal direct object inflection have bases without a final long vowel and all attested *yiqṭol* forms attach pronominal object suffixes by means of energic *nun*. The attachment of pronominal direct objects to *qṭal* forms directly and to *yiqṭol* forms by means of *-n-* is already found in Official Egyptian Aramaic (OEA),[5] Biblical Aramaic (BA), e.g., /satr-ēh/, /yšēzb-innåk/ (Rosenthal 1961, 71), and, more closely in time and place, in QA (Muraoka 2011, 141–43). Therefore, throughout Western Aramaic these two inflectional categories are simply a retention.

[5] See many examples in Official Egyptian Aramaic in Muraoka and Porten (1998, 144–46).

Thus, for the most part, the difference between non-targumic JPA and SA and other typologically earlier Western Aramaic dialects is not in their specific verbal morphology or verbal morphosyntactic constructions, but in the frequency of those forms and constructions, and in the morphophonemic shape of the periphrastic construction with /yāt/. The Aramaic of the Targum fragments from the Cairo Geniza alone stands out in not showing any verbal inflection for pronominal direct objects.

Below, the comparative approach is expanded to further examine features which have been retained from earlier Aramaic in non-targumic JPA and SA, and, no less importantly, features which have been lost altogether.

## 3.0. Possible Explanations

The overview above shows the morphosyntactic expression of pronominal direct objects in both Middle- and Late Western Aramaic to have been different from that of the earliest stages of Aramaic, where verbal inflection was widely used. Before offering an explanation of my own for the general change and for the specific situation in non-targumic JPA and SA, I would like to review the main possibilities already suggested.

Within Western Aramaic, differences between non-targumic JPA and SA and the rest of the dialects can be interpreted in at least three ways: as differences between (1) separate dialects or dialect branches, (2) separate chronological stages in a single dialect or dialect branch, and (3) the spoken and literary registers of a single dialect or dialect branch. The three possibilities are not mutually exclusive.

Tal (1985, especially 20–21) expresses the clear opinion that the divergent morphosyntaxes of pronominal direct object expression among the Middle and Late Western Aramaic dialects reflect differences between the spoken registers of *separate dialects*. In Tal's view, non-targumic JPA, from the Galilee, and SA from Samaria, were distinct from the Judaean Aramaic dialect in the Cairo Geniza Targum fragments. The latter indeed completely lost verbal inflection for pronominal direct objects, whereas the former dialects preserved it. Verbal inflection later reappeared in literary texts, such as the Palestinian Talmud and Tibat Marqe, when those non-Judaean dialects attained literary status. Tal notes that in non-targumic JPA and SA, some pronominal suffix forms changed from earlier Aramaic, but he does not connect this to other developments in the morphosyntax of Western Aramaic pronominal direct object expression, such as the lack of pronominal object inflection in targumic JPA. Stadel (2011, 240) suggests for SA that stylistics may have played a part in the propagation of the periphrastic construction.

In what follows, I argue for a different explanation from Tal's and Stadel's. Namely, all Western Aramaic dialects at the Late Aramaic stage or perhaps earlier had lost some of their verbal inflection for pronominal direct objects in the spoken language. This occurred specifically in the *qṭal* and imperative conjugations, which had long-vowel-final bases. A single underlying cause—morphophonological, not stylistic—was common to all Western Aramaic dialects of the region. As an initial result, pronominal direct object expression entered a state of flux, by which some older inflectional forms in the spoken language were lost

and replaced by novel morphosyntax, while other inflectional forms were retained. This state of asymmetry, whereby certain verb forms could express pronominal direct objects inflectionally, while others could do so only periphrastically via /yāt/, likely prompted authors of literary texts to widely avoid verbal inflection and employ periphrasis with all verb forms. Later, the state of flux was resolved when novel verbal inflection for pronominal direct object expression, which had originated in the spoken language, acquired literary status. This is directly related to the changes noted by Tal in the forms of pronominal suffixes in LWA, in comparison to earlier Aramaic. To elucidate these developments, special attention will devoted to verbal inflectional suffixes which were lost in LWA.

## 4.0. Historical Development of the Late Western Aramaic 3MSG Pronominal Direct Object

### 4.1. Loss of the 3MSG Biform /*-hī/ in the Verbal System

Perhaps the most notable morphological change in the pronominal object inflection of verbs in LWA, one which has not been identified by scholars, is the complete loss of the 3MSG pronominal suffix biform /*-hī/, so common outside of LWA. Tal (1985, 19–21), as mentioned above, recognises the replacement of specific verbal suffix forms with others in LWA, without diagnosing the loss of /*-hī/ as a general phenomenon. This sweeping change likewise goes unmentioned in Stadel's (2011) analysis of the historical development of SA pronominal object suffixes.

Originally, /*-hī/ occurred with Aramaic verbs, nouns, and prepositions, apparently only after long vowels or diphthongs, in complementary distribution with /*-ēh/, which occurred after consonants (Muraoka and Porten 1998, 148–51). Throughout the pronominal object inflection of LWA verbs, however, only reflexes of /*-ēh/ survived. The biform /*-hī/ only survived in LWA with nouns (20)–(21) and prepositions (22), where, in combination with the preceding stressed vowel, it was reduced to /-y/ or /-yi/, through elision of the /h/, a typical sound-shift in LWA.

(20) *ʾbwy* [ʾəˈbū-y(i)] ‘his father’ < /*ʾəˈbū-hī/
(21) *bnwy* [bnō-y(i)] ‘his sons’ < /*ˈbnō-hī/
(22) *ʿlwy* [ʿəˈlō-y(i)] ‘upon him’ < /*ˈʿlō-hī/

Tracking this loss of /*-hī/ in the verbal system and its outcomes in LWA contributes to the clarification of the question of pronominal direct object expression in LWA in general. In *qṭal*, forms with /*-hī/ would have been comparable with long-vowel-final verbal bases in earlier Aramaic, such as BA /ˈbnå̊-hī/ (23), and QA /naˈḥmū-hī(?)/ (24). From such forms, the /h/ of the suffix would have been elided in inter-vocalic position, as reflected in (20)–(22). Instead of the novel LWA forms of the type *ʾkʿsw-th* /ʾakʿsū-tēh/ (1), *ns-tyh* /nsā-tēh/ (2), and *ḥṭpwn-yh* (3), the historically expected forms, comparable with the BA (23) and QA (24) forms, should have been /*ʾakˈʿsū-y/, /*nsā-y(i)/, and /*ḥaṭpū-y(i)/ from earlier /*ʾakˈʿsū-hī/, /*ˈnsā-hī/, and /*ḥaṭˈpū-hī/, respectively. Such historically expected forms, however, are completely absent in LWA.

(23) /ˈbnå̊-hī/
build.PRF.3MSG-3MSG
'he built it' (Ezra 5.11)

(24) *nḥmw-hy* /naˈḥmū-hī(?)/
console.PRF.3MPL-3MSG
'they consoled him' (6Q8 2.1) (Muraoka 2011, 40)

We can already observe from (1)–(3) that where the earlier verbal inflection involving the pronominal biform /*-hī/ would have occurred in the LWA *qṭal* conjugation, it was mainly replaced by periphrasis by means of /yāt-ēh/—which in non-targumic JPA and in SA coalesced with the preceding verb. Other novel inflectional forms with *-n-* mediating the attachment of the 3MSG object suffix, such as *ḥṭpwn-yh* /ḥaṭpūnēh(?)/ (3), competed with forms such as /ʾakʿsū-tēh/ (1). Likewise, among III-weak 3MSG verbs, a form such as *ḥmn-yh* (25) from III-weak /ḥmā/ 'he saw', competed with the type /nsā-tēh/ (2). A third type of *qṭal* inflection in LWA attaches the 3MSG object suffix to 3MSG third-weak verbs as though they were strong verbs, such as with /qrā/ 'he read' (26). This might be an innovation, or conversely, a reflex of the earlier inflection of III-glottal roots, such as **qrʾ*, as strong verbs.

(25) *ḥmn-yh*
see.PRF.3MSG-3MSG
'he saw him' (Genesis Rabbah, 302)

(26) *w-qry-h* perhaps < /*w-qarʾ-ēh/
and-read.PRF.3MSG-3MSG
'and he read it' (Genesis Rabbah, 883)

On comparative considerations, the biform /*-hī/ likely occurred in the precursors to LWA in the imperative conjugation as well.

BA from the last centuries BCE shows the use of /-hī/ with the 2MPL imperative form ending in /-ū/ (27), and in QA from the directly preceding Middle Aramaic period, /-hī/ is found attached to a 2MSG imperative form of a III-weak verb in the *pəʿal* stem (28).

(27) /ḥabˈblū-hī/
destroy.IMPV.2MPL-3MSG
'destroy it' (Dan. 4.20)

(28) *pṣ-hy* /ˈpṣā-hī(?)/
rescue.IMPV.2MSG-3MSG
'rescue him' (Muraoka 2011, 40)

Nonetheless, only reflexes of /*-ēh/, not /*-hī/, are attested with LWA imperative forms for expressing 3MSG direct objects. As in the *qṭal* conjugation, forms ending in a long vowel, which historically take /*-hī/, attach /*-ēh/ by means of either *-t-*, deriving from periphrastic /*yāt-ēh/, or *-n-*. Attachment via *-t-* can be seen in *bzy* in the *paʿʿel* stem (29), a III-weak 3MSG verb (for further examples from SA, see Macuch 1982, 234). Comparable with BA /ḥabˈblū-hī/ (27) is the 2MPL imperative form *ʾrpw* (30), ending in /-ū/, which attaches the 3MSG pronominal object suffix /*-ēh/ via *-n-* mediation.

(29) *w-bzy-tyh* /v-bazzī-tēh(?)/
and-humiliate.IMPV.2MSG-3MSG
'and humiliate him' (y. Peʾah. 1.1 [15d])

(30) *ʾrpwn-h* /ʾarpūn-ēh(?)/
let.go.IMPV.2MPL-3MSG
'let go of him' (y. Ber. 7.3 [11c], Cairo Geniza fragment T-S F 17.52)

## 4.2. The 'Missing Link' between Early Aramaic /*-hī/ and Late Western Aramaic /-y(i)/

It can be assumed that at an earlier, undocumented stage, *qṭal* forms of the type /*nsā-y(i)/, /*ḥmā-y(i)/, /*ʾakʿsū-y(i)/, and /*ḥaṭpū-y(i)/ had indeed developed in the speech of Western Aramaic speakers from /*ˈnsā-hī/, /*ˈḥmā-hī/, /*ʾakˈʿsū-hī/, and /*ḥaṭˈpū-hī/, respectively, through the typical elision of intervocalic /h/. Comparable imperative forms, such as /*ʾarˈpū-y(i)/ from /*ʾarˈpū-hī / had likely also developed during that earlier period. The very phonological process is observed, as noted above, with the same historical suffix, when attached to nouns and prepositions (20)–(22).

In the verbal system, this missing link, so to speak, i.e., verb forms containing the inherited pronominal suffix /*-hī/, with intervocalic elision of the /h/, possibly occurs in a document from Wadi Sdeir in the form *ḥtmwy* /ḥatmū-y(i)(?)/ < /*ḥatmū-hī/ 'they signed it' (Muraoka 2011, 142). Outside LWA and the Western Aramaic region, such forms are documented in contemporaneous Syriac in *qṭal* (31) (Denz 1962, 50–54; see also Nöldeke 1904, 144–45), and in the imperative (32) (Nöldeke 1904, 140–43, 146).

(31) /glā-y/ < /*ˈglā-hī/
reveal.PRF.3MSG-3MSG
'He revealed him'

(32) /ʾapˈqū-y/ < /*ʾapˈpqū-hī/
cast.out.IMPV.2MPL-3MSG
'cast him out'

### 4.3. Expression of 3MSG Pronominal Direct Objects in the *yiqṭol* Conjugation

Reflexes of the biform /*-hī/ are also absent in the *yiqṭol* conjugation of LWA dialects, but in contrast to *qṭal* and the imperative, this situation appears to have been inherited from earlier Aramaic and does not necessarily indicate a loss of /*-hī/ in *yiqṭol*. We have already seen that LWA attaches pronominal suffixes to the *yiqṭol* conjugation with energic *nun*. The form of the 3MSG object suffix attached in that manner is indeed a reflex of /*-ēh/, spelled *-h* (16), (19), and (33), or *-yh* (34), not /*-hī/. Unlike the attachment of the pronominal suffix by means of *-t-* in *qṭal*, the imperative, and the infinitive, which is conditioned on base forms ending in a long vowel, in the case of *yiqṭol*, the pronominal suffix attaches by means of *-n-* whether the base form is consonant- (33) or vowel-final (34).

(33) *yškḥ-nh* *d-ʿbd-ø* *k-dn*
find.SUBJV.3MSG-3MSG COMP-do.PART-MSG like-this.MSG
'[…] would find him doing so' (CPA) (Matt. 24.46, according to Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff 1998, 48)

(34) *kd* *tḥmy-nyh*
when see.SUBJV.2MSG-3MSG
'when you see him' (JPA) (y. Berakot 2.1 [4a])

As pointed out above, LWA *yiqṭol* inflection by means of energic nun is generally an inherited Aramaic feature. Specifically, the attachment of the biform /*-ēh/ to energic *yiqṭol* is found already in BA (35) and QA (36).

(35) /ʾhōdʿ-innēh/
inform.IMPERF.1SG-3MSG
'I shall inform him' (Dan. 5.17; see Rosenthal 1961, 71)

(36) *yḥd-nh*
take.IMPERF.3MSG-3MSG
'he will take it' (4Q556 1.5; Muraoka 2011, 142)

Unlike the *qṭal* and imperative conjugations, where it is rather certain that the biform /-hī/ had been used in Western Aramaic, but lost in that branch by the LWA stage, a comparative analysis of non-LWA sources does not reveal unequivocally what changes had affected the biform /*-hī/ in the prefix conjugation of pre-LWA. OEA, from nearly a millennium before the Late Aramaic period, apparently documents both the biform /*-ēh/ (37) and /*-hī/ (38) attached to energic *yiqṭol*. Orthographically, these are expressed respectively as *-n-h* (37) and *-n-hy* (38).

(37) *ʾntnn-h*
give.IMPERF.1SG-3MSG
'I shall give it' (B4.6:5; Muraoka and Porten 1998, 145–46)

(38) *ykbšn-hy*
press.IMPERF.3MSG-3MSG
'he will press him' (B3.9:5; Muraoka and Porten 1998, 145)

By contrast, BA, from the latest phase of Official Aramaic, and QA, from the Middle Aramaic periods, document only the biform /*-ēh/ attached to energic *yiqṭol* (35)–(36).

Syriac, from the Late Aramaic period itself, appears to document both the pronominal suffix /*-ēh/ (39) and /-y/ < /*-hī/

(40), attached by means of *-n-* to the prefix conjugation (Nöldeke 1904, 137, 139–40).

(39) /neštōn-ē/ < /*neštōn-ēh/
drink.IMPERF.3MPL-3MSG
'they drink it'

(40) /nsīmūˈnā-y/ < /*nsīmūˈnā-hī/
place.IMPERF.3MPL-3MSG
'they place him'

Syriac *yiqṭol*, however, differs in several details from LWA *yiqṭol* in its pronominal direct object suffix inflection. Most importantly, unlike in LWA, it does not consistently attach pronominal suffixes, including the 3MSG biforms /*-ēh/ and /*-hī/, by means of energic *nun* (Nöldeke 1904, 137, 144–45). Thus, in the morphosyntax of their *yiqṭol* conjugation, LWA and earlier phases of Western Aramaic correspond most closely to the energic *yiqṭol* conjugation in BA and QA, where only the 3MSG pronominal object biform /*-ēh/ is found. It is therefore likely that already in the precursor of the LWA *yiqṭol* conjugation, the 3MSG biform /*-hī/ was not part of the inflection, and was not lost as LWA developed.

## 4.4. Summary of the Historical Development of the 3MSG Pronominal Direct Object

The 3MSG pronominal suffix biform /*-hī/, which is still found in LWA with nouns and prepositions in the reduced form *-y*, had been lost as an object suffix with verbs. Specifically, wherever /*-hī/ occurred in earlier Aramaic, it was replaced, either by the

periphrastic construction via /yāt/ or by novel non-inherited verbal inflection. In non-targumic JPA and in SA, the periphrastic construction was later phonologically reduced. Wherever verbal inflection using the biform 3MSG /*-ēh/ had already occurred before the loss of /*-hī/, it continued being used in LWA. Since prior to LWA, complementary distribution in the form of the 3MSG direct object between /*-C-ēh/ and /*-V̄-hī/ had existed in *qṭal* and the imperative (Nöldeke 1904, 134–39; Rosenthal 1961, 71; Muraoka and Porten 1998, 144–45), this resulted in complementary distribution in LWA between the forms /-C-ē/ < /*-C-ēh/ and /-V̄-tē/ (/-V̄ yātē/ in CPA), in place of /*-V̄-hī/. By contrast, with *yiqṭol*, the verbal morphology found in LWA, whereby the biform /*-ēh/ is suffixed to the verb by means of energic *nun*, had already existed in earlier Aramaic either as the sole means, or possibly in free interchange with the biform /*-hī/. For this reason, in the case of *yiqṭol*, LWA does not employ novel verbal morphology for expressing the 3MSG pronominal direct object. The result in all cases is that a reflex of the biform /*-ēh/ is the only form of the 3MSG direct object suffix in LWA. This analysis establishes a clear correspondence, presented in Table 1, between non-targumic JPA, SA, and CPA and earlier Aramaic in the morphosyntactic expression of 3MSG pronominal direct objects.

Table 1: Expression of 3MSG pronominal direct objects in OEA, BA, QA and LWA

| **OEA, BA, QA** | **LWA** |
|---|---|
| *yiqṭol-n* + /*-ēh/ | *yiqṭol-n* + /*-ēh/ |
| *qṭal*/imperative + /*-ēh/ | *qṭal*/imperative + /*-ēh/ |
| *qṭal*/imperative + /*-hī/ | *qṭal*/imperative + /yāt-ēh/ or novel verbal morphology |

## 5.0. Causes for the Loss of the 3MSG Pronominal Object Biform /*-hī/

After establishing that the 3MSG form /*-hī/ was eliminated from verbal inflection in pre-LWA and replaced by periphrasis or novel inflectional morphology, I now turn to offering an explanation for the elimination of /*-hī/. In so doing, I suggest that the complete absence of pronominal object suffixes with verbs in targumic JPA from the Cairo Geniza and the paucity of such object suffixes in other targumic texts reflect a transitional period, perhaps before /*-hī/ was completely eliminated, in which a state of flux in the spoken language caused the avoidance of pronominal object suffixes in the literary language.

### 5.1. Clash between 3MSG /*-y(i)/ < /*-hī/ and 1SG /-ī/ Verbal Suffixes in pre-Late Western Aramaic

As noted in §§4.1–2, a common sound shift in LWA and elsewhere was the intervocalic elision of /h/, which caused the 3MSG pronominal suffix /*-hī/ to shift to /-y(i)/, as can be seen in LWA with nouns and prepositions (20)–(22) and in Syriac with verbs (31)–(32). In §4.2, I proposed that at an earlier undocumented stage, the form /*-y(i)/ had indeed developed as the 3MSG pronominal direct object suffix, comparable with that documented in Syriac, in the speech of Western Aramaic speakers. I shall now argue that the elision of /h/ made the 3MSG pronominal suffix form /*-y(i)/ similar in sound to the 1SG pronominal suffix /-ī/. In combination with additional developments in LWA verbs, this brought about morphological ambiguity and confusion between the 1SG and 3MSG pronominal object suffixes. Resolution of that

ambiguity was the root cause of the loss of the biform /*-y(i)/ < /*-hī/ as the 3MSG pronominal direct object suffix in the LWA verbal system.

A starting point in my proposal is that ambiguity between LWA 3MSG /-y(i)/ < /*-hī/ and 1SG /-ī/ has already been shown by Fassberg (1987, 199–206; 1990, 118–19; 2001, 104–12) to have developed when those suffixes were attached to nouns and prepositions. Fassberg points out that in these non-verbal categories, JPA and CPA texts employ on occasion *-wy* /-ōy(i)/ < /*-ō-hī/, not for 3MSG as in (21)–(22), but for 1SG (20), convincingly arguing that such occurrences are the result of reanalysis of 3MSG /-y(i)/ after MPL nouns and MPL-like prepositions as indicating 1SG (Fassberg 2001, 105).

(41) *ʾd-w-y* < /ydōy(i)(?)/ < /*yˈdō-hī/ ‘his hands’
hand-PL-1SG
‘my hands’

Similar fluctuation is noted in Fassberg’s (1987, 204) analysis of singular nouns, such /ʾab/ ‘father’, /ʾaḥ/ ‘brother’, /ḥam/ ‘father-in-law’, whose bases end in /ū/ when taking pronominal suffixes. In earlier Aramaic, such nouns took the 3MSG suffixal form /*-hī/, reduced to /-y(i)/ in LWA. The orthographic form *-y*, which reflects /-y(i)/ < /*-hī/, is still the most prevalent form in LWA texts for expressing the 3MSG pronominal suffix with such nouns, as in (20), reproduced in (42). Fassberg notes, however, that JPA, CPA, and SA all document less common forms of these nouns, whereby the 3MSG pronoun has the orthographic form *-h* (43). Fassberg suggests that the same development, namely, the reanalysis of /-y(i)/ < /*-hī/ in forms such as /ʾəbūy(i)/ <

/*ʾabūhī/ as expressing 1SG brought about the development of forms such as (43), in which 3MSG is expressed by a suffix other than /-y(i)/ < /*-hī/.

(42) *ʾbw-y* < /*ʾaˈbū-hī/
father-3MSG
'his father'

(43) *ʾbw-h*
father-3MSG
'his father'

The fluctuations analysed by Fassberg disclose how, in the speech of LWA users, the phonologically reduced form of the 3MSG pronominal suffix /*-hī/ > /-y(i)/ and the 1SG form /-ī/ were confused, due to their similar phonetic realisation. With nouns and prepositions, this confusion did not cause the abolition of the 3MSG pronominal suffix /*-hī/ > /-y(i)/, but rather its incipient reanalysis as representing 1SG. I argue that the same clash between the phonetic realisation of the 3MSG pronominal suffix /*-hī/ > /-y(i)/ and the 1SG /-ī/ had developed in the pre-LWA verbal system, where, by contrast, the very 3MSG pronominal suffix form /*-hī/ > /-y(i)/ was eliminated. The development in the pre-LWA verbal system has not been recognised thus far, because the 3MSG pronominal suffix /*-hī/ > /-y(i)/ had completely disappeared before the creation of the extant texts, leaving no discernible traces.

## 5.2. Reanalysis of 1SG /-nī/ as /-n-ī/

In conjunction with the loss of 3MSG /*-hī/ > /-y(i)/ as a direct object suffix, LWA evinces another important development in the

morphology of pronominal direct object suffixes which bears upon the suffix for both 1SG and 3MSG. Historically, the 1SG pronominal object suffix form /-ī/ could attach to verbs only by means of *-n-*, as seen, for instance, in earlier dialects, such as OEA (44) (and see Muraoka and Porten 1998, 143–48 for additional examples) and in contemporaneous Syriac (Nöldeke 1904, 144–45). In LWA, however, the *qṭal* and imperative conjugations document the attachment of /-ī/ directly, without /-n-/ (45) (Macuch 1982, 225–26; Müller-Kessler 1991, 259–60; Stadel 2011, 242). This novel inflection, however, did not displace, but coexisted with, the older combination /-nī/, seen in the *qṭal* form in (46) (Macuch 1982, 225–27; Heijmans 2005, 112).

(44) *hnṣl-ny*
reclaim.from.PRF.3MSG-1SG
'he reclaimed from me' (B8.6:5) (Muraoka and Porten 1998, 144).

(45) *w-ʾʿl-y*
and-bring.in.PRF.3MSG-1SG
'and he brought me in' (JPA) (Genesis Rabbah, 762)

(46) *šlḥ-ny*
send.PRF.3MSG-1MSG
'he sent me' (SA Targum) (Macuch 1982, 226)

This development is no doubt linked to two further developments in LWA. The first is that verb forms without direct object suffixes that had historically ended in a long open syllable came to terminate in /-n/ (47)–(48) (see Tal 1979; Fassberg 1990, 165). Here, too, however, novel verb forms with /-n/ appear to have

coexisted with earlier vowel-final verb forms (49) (see Macuch 1982, 146).

(47) *w-ʾmrwn* < /*wV-ˈʔmarū/
and-say.PRF.3MPL
'and they said' (SA Targum to Gen. 19.2, Macuch 1982, 146)

(48) *šwmʿwn* < /*šumˈʿū/
hear.IMPV.2MPL
'listen!' (CPA) (Sokoloff 2014, 102)

(49) *w-ʿbdw*
and-do.PRF-3MPL
'and they did' (SA) (Tibat Marqe, Book One, Tal 2019, 34)

The second additional development in LWA was that formerly vowel-final *qṭal* and imperative verb forms, such as 3MPL *qṭal* /*ʔrīmū/ 'they raised' (50), had come to attach pronominal suffixes by means of final *-n*, thus taking suffixal biforms that attach to a final consonant.

(50) *w-rymwn-h* /v-ārīmūn-ā(?)/ in place of earlier Aramaic /*ʔrīmū-hā/
and-raise.PRF.3MPL-3FSG
'and they raised it' (JPA) (y. Beṣa 1.5 [60c], Cairo Geniza fragment T-S 17 34.2)

It is beyond the scope of the current article to determine the relative chronologies of the LWA verbal forms in (47)–(49), whose bases came to end in /-n/, and the form in (50), which came to attach pronominal suffixes using *-n-*. What is clear is that the increase in both types of verb forms facilitated the reanalysis of the older 1SG pronominal object suffix form /-nī/ (51), as consisting

of /-n/ belonging to the verbal base, together with the suffix /-ī/, which could then be attached directly to other verbal bases, as in *w-ʾʿl-y* in (45).

(51) *ʾlbšwn-y* /ʔalbšūn-ī/ < /*ʔalbšū-nī/
dress.IMPV.2MPL-1SG
'dress me' (JPA) (y. Kil. 9.4 [32b])

## 5.3. Effects of Reanalysis of 1SG /-nī/ as /-n-ī/ on the 3MSG Form /*-hī/

As the reanalysis of the direct object suffix /-nī/ as consisting of /-n-ī/ became established and the use of the direct object suffix /-ī/ for 1SG in place of /-nī/ expanded with *qṭal* and imperative verb forms in the precursors to LWA, the possibility that other occurrences of word-final /-ī/ could be interpreted as expressing the 1SG direct object pronoun would have increased. Especially the inherited 3MSG object suffix /*-hī/, from which intervocalic /h/ was elided, would have become ambiguous. With verb forms in Western Aramaic corresponding to Syriac /glā-y/ < /*glā-hī/ (31) and /apqū-y/ < /*appqū-hī/ (32), the 3MSG object suffix /*-y(i)/ could now be understood to signify both 3MSG and 1SG. This linguistic situation, to which I referred earlier as a state of flux, was likely not tolerated by speakers of Western Aramaic. Wherever the 3MSG object suffix /*-y/ < /*-hī/ occurred in the verbal system, it was eliminated, replaced in speech by other inflectional possibilities where available, or by periphrasis with /yāt + ēh/, where alternative verbal inflection was unavailable. This explains why no verb form with the inherited 3MSG direct object suffix /*-y(i)/ < /*-hī/ survived in any LWA dialect.

## 6.0. Relative Chronology

First, the historical morphophonology of pronominal direct object periphrasis via /yāt/ in *qṭal* and the imperative reveals something about its relative chronology. The reduced form of /yāt/, *-t-*, consistently follows verbal bases ending in /-V̄/, not /-V̄n/. This is indicated both orthographically and by the phonetic realisation of combinations with *-t-* in the Samaritan oral tradition. With respect to orthography, phonologically reduced *-t-* is never preceded by *-n*, i.e., SA *ʾkʿsw-th* (1). According to the Samaritan oral tradition, the *-t-* is preceded by a long vowel, i.e., *šbqw-th* /šåbåqū-te/ (Florentin 1991, 74), ruling out an underlying /-n-/, which assimilated to the following /-t-/.

It thus appears that periphrasis was already an established morphosyntactic alternative for expressing pronominal direct objects before verbal bases in *qṭal* and the imperative with final /-V̄/ began to shift to final /-V̄n/ and, therefore, before the 1SG pronominal object suffix began to fluctuate between /-nī/ and /-ī/. Moreover, the prepositional phrase /yāt + pronominal suffix/ must have already become tightly associated with the verbal base preceding it, preventing the older verbal bases with final /-V̄/ from shifting to final /-V̄n/.

Second, a comparison between the LWA verbal system, on the one hand, and its nominal and prepositional systems, on the other, regarding the fate of 3MSG /*-hī/, indicates that, upon elision of the /h/ from /*-hī/ > /*y(i)/, its reanalysis as signifying 1SG had taken place earlier in the verbal system. By the LWA stage, it had been completely abolished with verbs, but only began being reanalysed with nouns and prepositions. The historical

depth of the ambiguity of /*y(i)/ < /*-hī/ as marking either 3MSG or 1SG in the verbal systems of the precursors to LWA is further indicated by the existence of established innovative morphological and morphosyntactic means for expressing the 3MSG object suffix in place of /*y(i)/ < /*-hī/, i.e., bridging *-t-*, and other novel morphology, especially *-n-*.

## 7.0. The Transitional Character of Palestinian Targumic Aramaic Pronominal Object Inflection

Integrating all the data presented above, I suggest, as opposed to Tal (§4.0), that the complete lack of pronominal direct object inflection in targumic JPA from the Cairo Geniza does not reflect a situation that actually obtained in any spoken LWA dialect. Rather, it reflects a state of flux in the morphology of pronominal direct object inflection that had developed in the spoken language of the author(s) of the Targum as in other LWA dialects. A complete loss of pronominal direct object inflection in the spoken language underlying targumic JPA from the Cairo Geniza, as Tal suggests, cannot be attributed to phenomena particular to that dialect, nor to general LWA developments. By contrast, the loss of the 3MSG direct object suffix /*-hī/ > /*y(i)/ and its replacement with periphrastic /yāt-ēh/ specifically with *qṭal* and imperative forms, together with the retention of other older Aramaic inflectional morphology, can be explained by the general LWA phenomena outlined in the present article.

I thus suggest that the intervocalic elision of the /h/ in the 3MSG suffix /*-hī/ > /*y(i)/, the increase in verb forms whose

bases end in /-V̄n/, and resulting reanalysis of /-n/ in the 1SG pronominal object suffix /-nī/ as belonging to the verbal base /-V̄n-ī/ should be seen as indicative of transition, not unlike the fluctuation that LWA itself documents with regard to the 3MSG suffix /*-hī/ with nouns and prepositions.

During this transition period, in which pronominal object inflection was in a state of flux, especially regarding 1SG and 3MSG pronominal direct objects, and the morphosyntax of pronominal object expression was being reestablished in the spoken language, the author(s) of the Palestinian Targum from the Cairo Geniza refrained completely from employing pronominal object inflection, even those forms, which, historically, were inherited from earlier Aramaic, such as *yiqṭol* forms with energic *nun*, and consonant-final *qṭal* forms, attaching the 3MSG direct object suffix /*-ēh/. Instead, the author(s) of the Targum employed periphrasis via /yāt/, an alternative which had been established in LWA or its precursors.

Later, in talmudic JPA and elsewhere in LWA, the novel morphosyntax of the transition period, namely, the attachment of pronominal suffixes by means of phonologically reduced /yāt/ or *-n-*, which had been considered colloquial and unfit for literary use, became acceptable. The earlier abstinence from any verbal inflection for pronominal direct objects was abandoned, and the newly established system, containing both inherited and novel inflection was used in literary creation as well.

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# INDEX


ʿAbdul-Munʿim, Sāmi, 684
abecedaries, 493, 500
ablative, 695, 698, 700 n. 7, 703, 709 n. 33, 724–25, 730, 741
abstract, 172–75, 177–80, 306, 311, 315, 318, 319 n. 37, 322, 496, 705
Abulafia, R. Meir ben Todros Ha-Levi, 430
Academy of the Hebrew Language, 233, 363, 475, 645 n. 27, 846 n. 3
accents, 119–20, **189–221**, 456, 470–71, 586 n. 19, 590, 821–22, 825–26, 828
  conjunctive accents, 120 n. 7, 197–98, 201–3, 207–14, 415
  disjunctive accents, 120, 197–98, 202–3, 205, 210, 212, 214
accusative, 538, 556, 617–18, 754 n. 10, 787, 843, 846
Achaemenids, 753, 773, 777–78, 782, 788–89
acrostic, 493, 496–97, 504, 511
adjunct, 88 n. 50, 720, 743
Aeneid, *see* Virgil
Africa, 259, 262, 491, 529
agentive, 529, 532–33, 535, 537, 539, 545, 698 n. 4
Aġmātī, R. Zecharia ben Yehuda, 430–31
Agobard of Lyon, 502
Akkadian, 104, 111, 139 n. 5, 150, 368 n. 10, 397, 533–34, 535 n. 9, 538 n. 15, 557, 614–15, 621, 633, 634 n. 5, 636–37, 641–42, 644–47, 649 n. 39, 650–51, 652 n. 42, 777–78, 788–89
  Assyrian, 649
  Babylonian, 543, 649, 778
  Neo-Assyrian (NA), 150, 644
  Neo-Babylonian, 150
  Old Akkadian (OAkk), 368 n. 10, 631, 637, 649
  Old Assyrian (OA), 534, 631, 637
  Old Babylonian (OB), 542, 631, 638 n. 11, 736
Akko, 249–50
al-Bandanījī, 506
al-Farahidi, al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, 505
al-Fāsī, David, 507, 509–10
al-Karkhī, ʿAbbūd, 681–84
al-Zamakhsharī, 506
Alexander, 671, 776
Alexandria, 498–99

Algeria, 241–42, 507, 588
allative, 413–14
alliteration, 209
allomorph, 619, 621, 748 n. 2
alphabet, 243, 362, **491–527**
Amarna, 8–9, 22–24, 26, 29, 55–56, 788. *See also* Canaanite
American, 437, 492 n. 2, 683, 687, 690 n. 541, 691
Amharic, 557–58. *See also* Ethiopic
amoraim, 249
Amorite, 533–35
amulet, 578, 797–99, 813
analogy, 57, 173, 175, 343, 619, 625, 636, 764, 778, 848
anaphor, 15, 131, 139, 149, 152, 309–10
Ancient Near East, 539, 783
angel, 197, 370, 393, 541, 543, 707–8, 803, 805, 808, 811
Anglicism, 245, 555
Aphrahat, 504–5, 780
apocalyptic, 544 n. 21
apocopation, 826
apodosis, 8–10, 12–13, 16–18, 21–27, 29–30, **69–97**
approximant, 459, 468, 470
Aquila, 373–74
Arab, 437, 445, 643–46, 648–51, 662, 681
Arabia, Arabian, 493, 678, 763–64, 789
Arabic, 44, 104, 106, 144, 261–63, 385, 386 n. 3, 397, 399, 439–40, 442, 446–47, 461, 503, 505–6, 513, 534, 556–57, 566, 584, 588–90, 592–93, 596 nn. 37–38, 598, 600, 611, 612 n. 2, 613, 615–17, 619–22, 624–25, 631, 638, 641–46, 648–51, 652 n. 42, 662–64, 670, 681, 682 n. 512, 683, 685, 700, 708 n. 30, 720, **747–70**, 772–74, 789, **797–820**
Classical Arabic, 137, 139, 144 n. 8, 147–48, 439, 446, 557, 588, 613–18, 620–21, 623–24, 643, 763, 778–80, 789
Dhofari Arabic, 633 n. 3, 646 n. 30
Iraqi Arabic, **681–94**
Judaeo-Arabic, 460–61, 468, 510, 583, 588
Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), 631, 643, 681, 684
Moroccan Arabic, 558
Old Arabic, 747, 764
Palestinian Arabic, **421–53**, 591 n. 29
Quranic Arabic, 104
San'ani Arabic, 669
Standard Arabic, 798
Yemeni Arabic, 675

Arabism, 701 n. 8, 721 nn. 53–54, 759–60, 762
Aramaeans, 778
Aramaic, 50, 118, 141, 144, 150, 225 n. 5, 235, 368 n. 10, 385, 387, 397–99, 403, 408, 410–14, 416, 418–19, 442, 445–47, 467–68, 504, 505 n. 16, 578, 583, 592, 595, 611, 613, 616, 618, 619 n. 6, 621–23, 636, 641–47, 647 n. 36, 648–49, 651, 652 n. 42, **747–70**, **771–95**, 821–22, 841, **843–77**. *See also* Mandaic; Syriac
Babylonian Aramaic, 418
Biblical Aramaic (BA), 398, 580, 613, 616, 624, 853, 857, 859, 861–64
Christian Aramaic, 444, 747, 781
Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA), **747–70**, 845, 847–50, 852–53, 861, 864, 866, 869
Early Aramaic, 411, 860
Eastern Aramaic, 752 n. 7, 844
Galilean Aramaic, 444
Imperial Aramaic, 411, 777–78, 782
Jewish Aramaic, 365, 418, 440 n. 12, 543, 634 n. 5, 773, 778–80, 782–84
Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (JBA), 137 n. 3, 144, 631, 645, 648–49, 779, 798 n. 3
Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA), 747, 764, 779, **843–77**
Late Aramaic, 444, 844, 855, 862
Late Western Aramaic (LWA), 444, **843–77**
Middle Aramaic, 783, 789–90, 850, 859, 862
Nabataean Aramaic, 759, 762, 778, 784–85, 850
Neo-Aramaic (NA), 7–8, 582, 584, 586 n. 19, 590–91, 595, 751, 772, 833–34, 837
Barwar, 7–8, 834
North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA), 6, 8–9, 16, 25 n. 24, 590 n. 27, 593 n. 34, 642 n. 22, 643 n. 23, 645, 648 n. 38, 782, 822, 836
Ṭuroyo, 590 n. 27, 592 n. 33
Urmi, 590–91, 598–99, 642 n. 22, 643 n. 23, 751 n. 4, 833–34
Western Neo-Aramaic (WNA), 590, 748, 762
Official Aramaic, 862
Official Egyptian Aramaic (OEA), 853, 862, 864, 868

Palestinian Aramaic, 144, 748, 750, 752, 872
Proto-Aramaic, 619 n. 6
Qumran Aramaic (QA), 850, 853, 857, 859, 861–64
Samaritan Aramaic (SA), 44, 144, 444, 747, 764, **843–77**
Western Aramaic, 747–48, 752 n. 7, 762, 786–87, 843–44, 849–51, 853–55, 860, 862–63, 865, 870
Aramaism, 419, 442
archaeology, 250, 433–34, 438, 485
archaic, 20, 21 n. 18, 22 n. 20, 23, 26, 42–43, 56 n. 15, 118, 395, 535 n. 3, 595, 615–16, 619, 622
archaism, 363, 594–95, 598–99, 611, 617, 772, 787–88
archive, 417 n. 6, 497–98, 672–73, 784–85
Aristotle, 492 n. 1, 756
articulation, 225, 229–30, 232–33, 235, 247–48, 462, 506, 587–88, 675
Ashkenazi, 232, 239, 429, 474, 595
Assyrians, 777
Assyrian Akkadian, *see under* Akkadian
Assyrian Christians, 593, 598–99
asyndesis, 22, 26, 29–30
*ʾatbaš* cipher, 493
auxiliary, 11, 111, 114, 279 n. 11, 404
Avdima of Ḥaifa, R., 225, 228, 250
Babylonia, Babylonian, 191 n. 148, 373, 494, 540, 752, 777, 779, 782
Babylonian Akkadian, *see under* Akkadian
Babylonian reading tradition, *see under* Hebrew reading traditions
background, 16–17, 19, 134, 137–39, 169, 171, 250, 294, 332, 373, 436, 458, 467 n. 9, 544 n. 21, 591, 753, 758, 797
Baghdad, 469, 502, 507, 581, 587–88, 600, 682, 688 n. 530, 797–98
Baltic, 558, 567–68
bar Sisi, R. Levi, 225, 229, 233–35, 249–50
Bavarian, 559
Bedouin, 591, 684–91
ben Abraham of Sens, R. Samson (ha-Rash), 427
ben Asher, R. Jacob, 237
ben Labrāṭ, Dunash, 509
ben Saruq, Menaḥem, 507–9
Ben Sira, 50 n. 12, 53, 412
ben Yeḥiʾel, Nathan, 429, 432

benefactive, 335, 344–45, 530 n. 2
Berber, 789
Bereshit Rabbah, *see* Genesis Rabbah
Bible, 58, 104, 106, 158–60, 162–63, 179, 181–82, 209, 233, 365, 404, 405 n. 1, **479–88**, 511, 560, 755, 780–81, 787, 790, 823. *See also* Hebrew Bible; New Testament
biblicism, 487
biform, 137, 367–68, 856–58, 861–66, 869
bilingual, 533, 698 n. 4, 750, 755–56, 785
bishop, 162, 750, 780–81
borrowing, 243, 411, 418, 474, 493, 503, 595, 615, 649 n. 39, 686 n. 523, 748, 754–56, 760, 822, 825
British, 664, 666 n. 3, 674, 681–82, 684
British Academy, 661, 664, 669–70,
Bronze Age, 26
Byblos, 245–46
byform, 159–61, 173
Byzantine, 40, 195, 436, 438, 504, 508, 747, 750–52, 765, 781
*bət-qaṭəl*, 6–9, 16, 25
Cairo, 665
Cairo Geniza, 226–29, 508 n. 18, 510, 577, 583, 849–51, 854–55, 859, 865, 869, 872–73
calque, 414–15, 555–56
Canaan, 352, 389, 788
Canaanite, 8–9, 22–24, 26, 29, 55–56, 250, 485, 500, 544 n. 21, 611, 642 n. 21, 652 n. 42, 835. *See also* Amarna
Canaanite shift, 391
canon, 69, 190, 191 n. 147, 632, 709–10, 735
cantillation, 821
Catholic, 403, 664, 772
causal, 27, 196, 405, 417, 635, 653
Celtic, 492 n. 1, 567
chanting, 191, 193–95, 197–98, 207, 214–15
chiastic concord, 613, 620
China, Chinese, 495 n. 6, 781
Christian, 194, 378, 386, 492 n. 1, 493 n. 3, 495, 502, 504, 513, 579, 591, 593, 595, 598–99, 749, 751–52, 754, 756–59, 763–65, 771–74, 780, 783, 786, 789, 833–34, 844–45
chunking, 10–11, 22–23, 26
church, 502–3, 597, 753, 772, 781, 783
circumcision, 364, 392, 703
circumlocution, 577, 580

clause-type, 5, 6 n. 2, 8, 12, 19, 23, 25–26, 29–30
codex, 190, 195 n. 152, 364, 365 n. 6, 760, 797 n. 2, 846 n. 3
Aleppo Codex, 189, 370 n. 16, 372 n. 18, 376 n. 21
Codex Climaci Rescriptus, 761, 763
Codex Sinaiticus, 189
Codex Vaticanus, 189
Leningrad Codex, 108 n. 3, 118 n. 5, 160, 214
cognate, 47, 50, 53–54, 235, 368 n. 10, 447, 535, 556–57, 561, 634, 762–63
collective, 136, **259–90**, **291–329**, 634 n. 7
colloquial, 442, 447, 560, 579, 681, 685, 798 n. 2, 813, 873
commentary, 79–80 n. 24, 161–67, 177, 181, 229 n. 9, 230 n. 10, 238, 240, 244, 367 n. 8, 375, 376 n. 22, 429–30, 440, 508 n. 18, 681, 682 n. 512, 691
concrete, 172, 174–75, 177–80, 319 n. 37, 335–36, 352
conditional, 9, 11 n. 5, 12–16, 21, 24 n. 22, 25, 30, **69–97**, 306, 349
conjugation, 26, 537, 749, 843, 846, 848, 850, 855, 858–59, 861–63, 868
prefix conjugation, 46, 536, 822–23, 834, 836–37, 862–63
suffix conjugation, 535 n. 10, 636, 822, 837
conjunction *waw*, 11, 22, 39–40
consecutive, 5, 6 n. 2, 14
conservative, 580, 593, 772, 787–88
Constantine, Algeria, 588
construct, 189, 233, 259, 264, 304 n. 16, 309, 364, 368, 408, 410, 464, 469–71, 473, 538 n. 14, 557, 570, 618, 788
construction theory, 6, 9–10, 19
Coptic, 111, 504, 543, 558, 789
creole, 775, 778
cuneiform, 493 n. 3, 494, 535 n. 9, 777, 788
*dagesh*, 39, **157–88**, 441, 589, 595
*dagesh mavḥin*, **157–88**
strong *dagesh*, 5 n. 2, 158, 171
weak *dagesh*, 171
database, 46 n. 9, 103 n. 1, 243, 458, 845 n. 2, 846 n. 3
Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), 47, 50–52, 169 n. 11, 182, **359–83**, 385, 496, 579, 594. *See also* Qumran

defective, 363–64, 365 n. 6, 370, 372, 374 n. 20, 376 n. 21, 623
definiteness, 264, 286, 294, 299–302, 304, 308–9, 313–14, 324
deity, 334–36, 343, 497 n. 8, 533, 540, 541 n. 18, 544, 577–78, 580–81, 584–85, 592, 594–95
demon, 542–44, 750, 829, 835
demonstrative, 247 n. 42, 272, 309, 362, 623–25, 654, 786, 833, 840
Demotic, 499
denominative, 145 n. 8, 530–31
dependency treebank, **99–130**
determiner, 259–61, 263, 286, 291–92, 304–5, 308 n. 20, 324
devoicing, 236–38, 247
Dhofar, 661–62, 671, 676, 678
diachronic, 12, 27, 39–40, 49, 53, 56, 96, 262–64, 283, 345, 403, 441, 765
dialect, 6–8, 25 n. 24, 225 n. 5, 250, 262, 403, 408, 411–12, 418, 439, 444, 557–58, 565, 567–68, 590–91, 595, 596 n. 37, 598, 600, 624, 634 n. 5, 638, 641 nn. 18–19, 646 n. 30, 652 n. 42, 662–64, 697, 743, 748, 752–53, 755, 762, 764, 773–74, 776–77, 779–84, 787, 789, 798, 822, 833–34, 836–37, 840–41, 844, 849–51, 853–55, 861, 868, 870, 872
dialect continuum, 411, 783
digital, 230 n. 10, 236 n. 23, 360, 661, 669–71, 674–75, 797
diphthong, 372 n. 19, **455–78**, 595 n. 36, 616, 619, 857
diplomacy, 482, 497, 773, 777–78, 782, 789, 799
directionality, 332, 333 n. 3, 334–37, 344 n. 15, 345–46, 350–52
discourse active, 73, 76, 79–80, 82, 85, 86, 92
discourse dependency, 6, 9 n. 3, 13, 42–44
distributive, **259–90**, **291–329**, 538
dittography, 807, 812
dots, 584, 623, **821–42**
Ebla, 534, 540, 788
ecclesiastical, 747, 750, 752–54, 756, 765, 783
Edessa, 752 n. 7, 754, 778, 780, 785–87, 825
Egeria, 750–51
Egypt, Egyptian, 13, 80, 138–39, 245–46, 320, 332, 343, 352, 410, 493 n. 3, 497–500, 542–43, 681, 779, 788–89

ending, 51, 422, 424–25, 468, 583, 612, 616–20, 622–23, 626, 637, 664, 748, 763, 847, 852, 859, 861, 871
energic, 848, 851, 853, 861–64, 873
English, 10, 79 n. 24, 106, 131 n. 1, 162–63, 165, 199, 259 n. 1, 260–61, 265, 269, 277, 279 n. 11, 292, 294, 296, 298, 305, 312 n. 25, 337 n. 8, 369 n. 12, 385 n. 1, 387 n. 4, 398, 417, 466, 492 n. 1, 510, 560, 562, 584, 682 n. 512, 685, 694, 757, 772–73, 789, 800
  Old English, 567
epenthesis, 614, 618–19, 621, 822
Ephrem, 780
epigraphy, 105, 119, 121–22, 747 n. 1, 753, 756, 786–87
Epiphanius of Salamis, 749
epithet, 370, 377, 391, 577, 580
Eretz Israel, 385, 437–38, 456, 482, 484, 487
Ethiopia, Ethiopian, 446, 493 n. 3, 556, 578
Ethiopic, 533, 636, 645. *See also* Amharic; Geʿez
Etruscan, 243
etymology, 40, 139, 398, 408, 423, 433, 441, 445–47, 457, 462, 464–65, 472, 500, 599, 640, 642 n. 20, 648, 649 n. 39, 755 n. 11, 759–61
euphemism, 166, 577, 741 n. 84
euphony, 332–33, 344, 346, 352
European languages, 121 n. 8, 417, 560, 569
exegesis, 180–81, 197–98, 200, 202–4, 207, 209, 211, 213–15, 361, 366, 371, 378, 394, 398, 406, 429, 753
factitive, 143, 760
Farsi, 774, 781
Fayyum, 499
Feierberg, Mordechai Zeev, 482
feminine, 159, 238 n. 25, 267, 272 n. 5, 362, 367, 392, 537, 540, **611–29**, **631–60**, 726 n. 63, 748
fieldwork, **661–80**
*figura etymologica*, **555–75**
figurative, 209, 376, 711
Flaccus, Verius, 501
focus, 18, 19 n. 15, 25, 29–30, 69–71, 87, 89–92, 94 n. 63, 95–96, 139, 152, 198, 342, 569, 833
formalism, 100–101, 105, 107, 111, 115–16, 121–22
French, 417, 562, 775, 789
fricative, 595, 750
fronting, **69–97**, 199, 202, 833

future, **5–36**, 30, 45, 55, 749
Galilee, 249–50, 435, 437, 753, 855
Gaza, 246 n. 41
Geʿez, 556, 613 n. 2, 614 n. 4, 617, 621, 622 n. 9. *See also* Ethiopic
*gemaṭria*, 494–95
gemination, 37–42, 46, 158–59, 162 n. 5, 171, 173–74, 177–79, 234, 364, 368, 390–92, 446, 469, 589, 832
gender, 404, 458, 460, 465, 612, 613 n. 3, 619–20, 623, **631–60**
Genesis Rabbah, 249, 496 n. 7, 845, 858, 868
genitive, 695, 698 n. 4, 785
geography, 249–50, 484, 487, 663, 669, 752, 754 n. 8, 771, 783
German, 555, 558, 562–64, 566–68, 570, 615, 632 n. 2, 698, 729 n. 68, 750
  Old High German, 567
Germanic, 492 n. 1, 566–67, 569
glottal, 390, 442, 444, 447, 858
Gnostic, 578
gospels, 190, 191 n. 147, 749, 760, 827, 835–36
Gothic, 556
grammar, 11, 37 n. 1, 103 n. 1, 104, 173, 246, 248, 260–61, 331, 352, 388, 697, 821–22
  construction grammar, 42
  dependency grammar, 103, 105–7, 111–12, 114, 121–22
  generative grammar, 663
  phrase structure grammar, 103–5, 121
grammarians, 175, 179–80, 192, 237, 821, 823–25, 834, 840
grammaticalisation, 11, 260, 263, **403–20**, 625
Greek, 37, 39, 41, 44, 47, 101, 104, 116–19, 121, 189–90, 195 n. 152, 261, 365, 372–74, 376–78, 379 n. 26, 407, 493–96, 503–4, 508, 510, 560, 567, 578, 580, 593–94, **747–70**, 772, 776, 778–81, 784–85, 821–22, 825–27
  *koinē* Greek, 776, 780–81
Gregorian chant, 194–95, 214
guttural, 209, 444, 468, 475, 750
habitual, 5–8, 10–11, 16–20, 24–25, 306–7, 393, 848
Ḥaifa, 225, 228, 249–50, 463, 467–68, 529
*halakha*, 228, 239, 405, 455–56 n. 2, 577, 582
*hapax legomenon*, 508–9
haplography, 807
haplology, 618
Hashemite, 684, 688 n. 530

Haskala, 479–80, 482–83
*ḥaṭef qameṣ*, 363
Hebrew, 23–24, 27, 39, 46 n. 9, 47 n. 10, 101, 104, 108 n. 3, 111, 118, 120, 131, 145, 160 n. 2, 165, 168, 179–80, 182, 189, 209, 223, 232–33, 235–36, 239, 246, 250, 259–63, 265, 292 n. 1, 300 n. 9, 302 n. 13, 312 n. 25, 332, 363, 365–66, 368 n. 10, 376 n. 22, 377, 379 n. 26, 385, 387, 391, 403, 407–8, 411–12, 414, 416, 418–19, 432, 440 n. 12, 442, 445–46, 455, 457–59, 461, 465–66, 468, 470, 472–75, **479–88**, 495, 503, 505 n. 16, 507, 509–13, 534, 556, 560, 564–65, 568, 570, 578, 579, 583, 585–88, 590–91, 593, 595, 600, 614–16, 621–23, 632 nn. 1–2, 633, 634 n. 5, 637–8, 641–51, 772, 778–79, 786, 799, 821, 825, 845 n. 2, 846 n. 3, 852
Amoraic Hebrew, 233
ancient Hebrew, 42 n. 6, 53, 104–5, 234, 342–43, 364–65, 578
Archaic Hebrew, 11, 20
Biblical Hebrew (BH), **5–36**, **37–68**, **69–97**, **99–130**, **131–56**, **157–88**, **189–221**, **223–58**, **259–90**, **291–329**, **331–57**, **359–83**, 399, 404, 406, 408–9, 411, 414, 418, 443, 445, 479–80, 538 n. 15, 556–57, 561, 570, 580, 589, 592–94, 600, 611, 613–14, 616–17, 619, 621, 623, 641–44, 646–51, 849
Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH), 12, 16, 21–25, 27–29, 53–54, 57, 58 n. 16, 294, 306, 312 n. 24, 315, 317, 321–25, 418
Classical Hebrew, 12, 20, 407 n. 2, 465
contemporary Hebrew, **455–78**
General Israeli Hebrew (GIH), **455–78**
Israeli Hebrew, 363–64, 557
Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH), 49, 54, 82–83, 306, 345 n. 16, 414
medieval Hebrew, 175, 179–80, 586 n. 18
Mishnaic/Middle Hebrew (MH), 250, 398, **403–20**
Modern Hebrew, 165, 259–60, 262–64, 269, 277, 293–94, 298, 301, 304 n. 16, 310, 312, 314–17, 319 n. 36, 322, 325, 362–64, 458, **479–88**, 570, 633 n. 3, 639, 641, 645, 647 n. 33, 650 n. 41

Old Hebrew, 403, 412–14, 418
palaeo-Hebrew, 47, 579, 594
post-biblical Hebrew, 173, 180, 570, 580, 589, 644
post-Tannaitic Hebrew, 416–17
pre-exilic Hebrew, 12 n. 7, 27, 29
pre-modern Hebrew, 259, 264
pre-rabbinic Hebrew, 53
Qumran Hebrew (QH), 304 n. 15, **359–83**, 403, 641, 648
Rabbinic Hebrew (RH), 53, 58, 160, 165, 168, 170, 172–75, 178–79, 181, 232, 234–35, 263, 293 n. 2, **421–53**, 631, 644, 648–51
Samaritan Hebrew (SH), 51–52, **385–401**, 444, 581
spoken hebrew, 456, 459 n. 4, 465, 475, 479
Tannaitic Hebrew, 414–17
Hebrew Bible, 72, 85, 119, 158–59, 182 n. 15, 191, 203 n. 155, 281, 291, 340, 343, 353, 364, 367 n. 9, 412–13, 479–80, 488, 541, 560, 579, 585, 594, 780. *See also* Tanakh
Hebrew reading traditions, 5 n. 2, 37, 38 n. 3, 39–41, 44, 52 n. 13, 161, 166, 170–71, 174, 178, 182, 192, 195–96, 212, 223, 225 n. 4, 387, 398, 455, 461, 469, 475, 587, 593, 798–99
Ashkenazic, 455–57, 459 n. 4, 467 n. 9, 469
Babylonian, 39, 41, 160 nn. 2 and 4, 171 n. 12, 172, 178–79, 192, 213 n. 161, 235 n. 22, 442, 444–45, 447, 586, 589, 623 n. 11
Cochin, Kerala, 593
Mizraḥi, **455–78**
Palestinian, 41
Samaritan, 39–41, 44, 52, 172, 178, 586, 871
Sephardic, 455–56, 459 n. 4
Tiberian, 38 n. 2, 39–41, 43–44, 46–47, 53–54, 57, 161, 165, 170–71, 180–82, 190–92, 213 n. 161, 223, 225 n. 4, 390–92, 455–56, 600, 619, 623. *See also* Masoretic
Yemenite, 173, 462, 595 n. 36
Hekhalot, 504
hierarchy, 120, 201, 205–9, 214, 343
hieratic/hieroglyphic, 245
Hindu, 193, 195
Ḥisda, R., 225–26, 233
historical linguistics, 264, 332, 343 n. 13

historiolae, 798
Hittite, 8
homily, 194, 843
homonym, 378 n. 25, 498 n. 8
homophone, 38–39, 161, 171, 174
honorific, 334, 337 n. 9, 342, 556
Hungarian, 422 n. 2, 558
Hurrian, 615–16
hymn, 194, 542
ibn al-Muẓaffar, al-Layth, 505
ibn Balaam, Judah, 177, 180
Ibn Ezra, 507 n. 18, 585 n. 17
Ibn Gabirol, 586 n. 18
ibn Janāḥ, Jonah, 176, 180, 507–8 n. 18
ibn Ḳuraysh, Judah, 507
idiom, 407, 595, 683, 748, 750, 756, 764, 774, 776, 798
Iliad, 117
imperative, 27–28, 148, **331–57**, 404, 479, 590, 676, 749, 813, 818 n. 17, 822–25, 827, 834–36, 843, 847–49, 855, 858–62, 864, 868–72
imperfect, 272, 389, 397, 409, 580, 611 n. 1, 764, 782
imperfective, 5, 16, 20, 24–25, 27
incantation, 543, 818
Indo-European, 102, 104–5, 107, 116, 558, 567
  Proto-Indo-European, 567
infinitive, 73, 78–80, 84, 148 n. 11, 233, 367 n. 7, 404, 409, 535 n. 10, 556–57, 560–62, 565, 569–70, 632 n. 2, 748, 764, 840, 843, 847–50, 861
inflection, 146, 148 n. 10, 194, 267, 296 n. 4, 305, 310, 314–15, 318, 335, 405, 612, 622 n. 9, 637, 654, **843–77**
innovation, 5 n. 2, 12, 23, 38, 39, 55, 178–79, 261, 388–89, 390 n. 5, 397, 511, 535 n. 3, 612, 615, 617, 622 n. 9, 626, 748, 843–44, 848, 858, 872
inscriptions, 12 n. 7, 27, 29, 101, 241 n. 31, 243–45, 613 n. 2, 747, 753, 755–59, 763–64, 771, 784–87
interchange, 234, 236–37, 374, 440 n. 12, 614, 864
interdental, 588, 599–600
interjection, 179, 397–98, 824, 840
interrogative, 279 n. 11, 306, 397, 625, 828–33, 837, 840
intonation, 201, 207, 209, 214, 840
Iran, Iranian, 777–78, 781, 789
Iraq, Iraqi, 468, **681–94**, 781
Irenaeus of Lyon, 503
Iron Age, 27, 37, 40, 43, 50, 54, 434–35, 493
irrealis, 42–43

Ishmael, R., 494
Islamic, Muslim, 193, 457, 461, 475, 491, 505, 513, 578, 584, 588, 590–91, 600, 663, 747, 756–58, 761, 763–65, 772, 774, 789, 798
isogloss, 611 n. 1, 748
Israel, 75, 80, 86, 94, 137–38, 147, 165–67, 181, 224 n. 1, 239, 274–75, 282, 305, 307, 311, 316, 320–21, 323, 333, 359–60, 386, 389, 460, 465–66, 475, 479, 485, 487–88, 493, 495, 500, 587, 589, 739. *See also* Eretz Israel
Israeli, 363, 457–58, 459 n. 4, 466, 468, 470, 474, 487
Israelite, 86, 90–91 n. 57, 138, 272, 274, 282, 301, 373
Italian, 105, 500, 559, 579, 774
Jerome, 376 n. 22, 749–51
Jewish, 41, 170, 178, 181, 191, 224 n. 1, 231 n. 12, 236, 249–50, 363, 378, 389, 411, 418, 455, 458, 475, 479–80, 482–85, 495, 502–4, 507, 510–11, 513, 543, 544 n. 21, 560, 564–65, 569, 577–82, 584, 587, 590–91, 593, 595, 598, 600, 751, 752 n. 7, 756–57, 765, 773–74, 779–80, 782–87, 789, 822, 843–44
Jījān, ʿAbbās, 681–83
Jonah, R., 225, 233 n. 16
Jordan, 465, 752, 756, 758, 765
Josephus, 752 n. 7
Joshua of Sikhnin, R., 249
Judaean, 47, 367, 371, 377, 484, 784, 855
Judah, Judahite, 80, 273, 311, 374, 479, 481, 507, 825
Judah ha-Nasi, 249
Judezmo, 564, 581
jussive, 5 n. 1, 27, 40, 44, 55–57
Karaite, 192, 224, 584–85
*ketiv*, 46 n. 9, 47, 344, 395. *See also qere*
Kimḥi, *see* Qimḥi, David
kinship, 696 n. 1, 699, 742–43
koine, **771–95**. *See also koinē* Greek *under* Greek
Land of Israel, *see* Eretz Israel
Late Antiquity, 167, 170, 543, 747, 773, 779
Latin, 37, 39, 41, 44, 101, 104, 116–19, 121, 194, 243, 365, 374, 376 n. 22, 503, 511, 513, 560, 567, 593–94, 749–50, 752, 754, 772–74, 778–80, 799
Lebanon, 241–43, 408
legal, 21 n. 18, 30, 86, 87 n. 48, 338, 497, 559, 778, 781, 783–85, 790
Levant, 411, 434, 500
Levi, R., 225, 228–29, 233–35, 249–50

lexicography, 144 n. 8, 361, 407, 505–7, 750, 763
Libya, 241, 666
ligature, 583–84
lingua franca, **771–95**
linking, 9 n. 3, 13–16, 20–21, 24 n. 22, 25, 55
Lithuanian, 558
liturgy, 194, 214–15, 224, 504, 750, 753, 756, 772, 789
loanwords, 412, 466, 555, 560, 644, 700, 722, 754 nn. 9–10, 755 n. 11, 758–59, 761–62, 825–26
locative, 622
Luther, 560–62
Lycian, 778
magic, 193, 543, 577–78, 797, 798, 810, 812–13, 816
Maimonides, 227–28, 232, 236, 238, 240, 430–31, 577 n. 1
Malayalam, 261, 774, 781
Maltese, 557–58
Mandaean, 504, 798, 816, 818 n. 17
Mandaic, 586 n. 19, 649, **797–820**
Manoaḥ of Narbonne, R., 238–39, 250 n. 47
manuscript, 52–53, 169, 191, 194, 211–12, 214, 226–31, 239, 249 n. 46, 359, 365 n. 6, 370 n. 16, 376 n. 21, 386–87, 394, 397–98, 422, 469, 508 n. 19, 511–13, 583, 749 n. 3, 753, 757–58, 760–63, 787, 797, 798–99, 801, 803 n. 6, 827, 840–41, 845
Mapu, Abraham, 480, 483
Maronites, 821
Masada, 189, 500
masculine, 267, 272, 367–68, 537, **611–29**, **631–60**
*maskilim*, 479, 482–83
Masorah, 225 n. 4
Masoretes, 165
Masoretic, 37–38, 40–41, 45, 47–51, 54, 56–58, 119, 122, 171 n. 12, 190–92, 197, 365 n. 6, 370, 374, 376 n. 21, 507–8, 780, 827. *See also* Tiberian *under* Hebrew reading traditions
Masoretic Text (MT), 45–49, 52, 54, 158, 163, 167–71, 192, 203, 211, 214, 235, 359, 362, 365 n. 6, 369, 371–77, **385–401**, 759, 852
*matres lectionis*, 372 n. 19, 388, 457
medieval, 144, 168, 175, 179–80, 211, 212 nn. 160–61, 237, 364, 365 n. 6, 375, 502, 507, 511, 765, 774, 779. *See also* Middle Ages
medicine, 507 n. 18, 510, 641, 645 n. 27, 798 n. 3
medio-passive, 135, 143, 534

Mediterranean, 246, 491, 508, 772, 775, 778, 782, 788
melody, 194–95
menstruation, **797–820**
Mesopotamia, 497, 498 n. 8, 542, 752, 758, 771–72, 777, 779, 782–83, 788, 798 n. 3
Messiah, 169–70, 361, 371, 596–98, 830 n. 7
metalinguistic, 492, 494, 502, 504
metaphor, 279 n. 10, 336, 352, 483
metre, 194, 208, 436, 683 n. 513, 686 n. 524
Middle Ages, 170, 492 n. 1, 502, 504, 513, 773. *See also* medieval
Middle East, 191 n. 148, 502, 773, 777–80, 788
midrash, 406, 504 n. 14, 843
mimation, 616, 619
Mishna, 160, 250, 403, 405, 421, 424–25, 427–28, 430, 432–33, 438, 440–42, 444–45, 447, 456 n. 2, 469, 501
Mishneh Torah, 236, 238, 240, 430–31
Moabite, 50
modal, 22–24, 26–29, 42, 46, 48, 55–56, 88, 114, 260, 293, 302 n. 13, 306, 339, 559, 759
monks, monasteries, 502, 747, 752–53, 781
monophthong, **455–78**
monster, 533, 542, 545
Morocco, 468
morphology, 38–40, 44, 46–58, 100, 102, 114, 131, 133, 135, 142, 150, 159, 173, 182, 232–33, 261, 310–11, 390, 392–93, 396–97, 399, 442–43, 445, 459, 469, 533, 592 n. 32, 593–94, 622, 632–33, 635, 637, 639, 645, 654–55, 663–64, 845, 848, 854, 856, 864–65, 868, 872
morphophonemic, 854
morphophonology, 171, 855, 871
morphosemantics, 53
morphosyntax, 264, 286, 294, 308–9, 313, 317 n. 32, 318, 321, 324, 631, 843, 845, 849, 852, 854–56, 863–64, 871–73
Mossinsohn, Ben-Tzion, 484
Mosul, 595
mountains, 7, 393, 484, 563, 663–67, 669, 676, 679
  Mount Carmel, 437, 483
  Mount Ebal, 389
  Mount Ephraim, 484
  Mount Gerizim, 389, 396
  Mount Sinai, 284–85, 308
Muḥammad, 193, 584, 600, 818

musical, 194, 198
Muslim, *see* Islamic
Nabataeans, 784–85
names
personal names, 243, 462, 467–68, 535 n. 9, 763, 785
place names, 246 n. 41, 368, 468
sacred names, **577–610**
narrative, 6–7, 25 n. 24, 41, 44, 95 n. 66, 340, 483, 533, 536, 812
neologism, 233, 235, 388
New Hebrews, 484
New Testament, 118, 162 n. 5, 361, 495, 543
nominative, 538 n. 14, 594, 617, 622 n. 9, 637, 763
Norwegian, 133
numeral, 310–11, 462, 467, 470, 495 n. 6, 498 n. 8, 582, **611–29**, 646 n. 29, 812
nunation, 616
Obama, Barack, 682
oblique, 134, 137–38, 146 n. 9, 150, 619, 620 n. 7, 637
Occitan, 250 n. 47
Old Church Slavonic, 749
Old Frisian, 567
Old Irish, 567
Old Norse, 566–67
olives, 429–32, 434, 472
olive oil, 434, 436, 597 n. 39
olive press, **421–53**
Oman, Omani, 613, 675
onomastics, 534, 535 n. 3, 750, 763
onomatopoetic, 234–35
oral, 159 n. 1, 166, 170, 182, 223, 225 n. 4, 387, 579, 600, 871
orthoepy, 38, 362 n. 3
orthography, 41, 169 n. 11, **359–83**, 459, 473, 577, 581, 584, 594, 843 n. 1, 845, 848, 862, 871
ostraca, 493, 500, 781
Ottomans, 230, 682
pagan, 172, 174, 584, 593, 751, 753 n. 8, 783, 787
palaeography, 228, 244, 359, 577, 762 n. 15
palatal, 459, 468, 470, 474
Palestine, Palestinian, 41, 191, 368 n. 9, 434, 444–45, 436, 482–83, **747–70**, 779, 782, 784, 788–89, 844
Palestinian reading tradition, *see under* Hebrew reading traditions
papyri, 498, 578, 753, 759, 778, 781
parabiblical tradition, 169–70, 181
paragogic *heh*, 334
parchments, 778
parliament, **681–94**
paronomasia, 556

participle, 6–7, 15, 17–18, 149, 159, 173, 179, 272, 274, 405, 462, 472, 748–49
particle, 56 n. 15, 82, 108, 110, 339, 344, 347 n. 19, 397–98, 404, 406–7, 412–15, 538 n. 14, 755, 786–87, 830, 834
partitive, 308 n. 19, 317 n. 31, 703
passive, 135, 159, 392, 532 nn. 3–4, 556, 735 n. 75, 748 n. 2
passivisation, 566
Passover, 140, 409, 593, 830
*pataḥ*, 38 n. 2, 456, 585–86, 592, 595
  furtive *pataḥ*, 465, 468
patronym, 246 n. 41, 249, 806, 808
pausal forms, 28, 189, 585–87, 592, 594 n. 35, 623–24, 840
Pentateuch, 21 n. 18, 45, 47–48, 50–51, 53–54, 57, 195 n. 152, 385, 390, 399, 851. *See also* Torah
  Samaritan Pentateuch (SP), 44, 50–51, 144 n. 7, 159 n. 1, 318 n. 34, **385–401**
perfective, 5, 23, 41, 43, 45, 55
periphrastic, 749, 846–56, 858–59, 864–65, 870–73
Persian, 510, 686 n. 523, 773, 777, 783
Peshitta, 149 n. 12, 369, 376, 407 n. 3, 780–81, 783, 786
Petachia of Ratisbon, R., 191 n. 148
pharyngeal, 595, 598 n. 44, 616
pharyngealisation, 193
Philo, 170
philology, 157–58, 160, 163, 173, 180, 228, 338, 421, 600, 765, 771
philosophy, 196, 483 n. 1, 498, 692, 753, 756
Phoenician, **223–58**, 534 n. 6
phonetics, 11–12, 20, 39, 193, 195, 364, 390–93, 459, 492 n. 2, 505, 581, 589–90, 595, 622, 665, 674, 695, 753, 758, 812, 867, 871
phonology, 44–45, 55, 100, 119, 122, 159, 161, 237, 246–47, 261, 390, 415, 455, 457–59, 462, 465–66, 468–69, 473–75, 587–89, 592–94, 596, 598–99, 632, 662–64, 674, 760, 763, 821, 843–45, 848, 860, 864, 867, 871, 873
pidgin, 774–75, 778
Plautus, 243
*plene*, 363–64, 370, 372, 374, 376, 378 n. 25, 462, 468, 473, 585, 786
plosive, 171, 391 n. 6, 587
Plutarch, 499–500

poetry, 12, 20, 26 n. 24, 49–50, 56, 77, 80, 95 n. 66, 189–92, 194, 197–98, 200–1, 203–4, 207, 209, 213–15, 299, 306, 312 n. 24, 340, 352, 486–87, 495–96, 498, 504–5, 507 n. 17, 531–32, 536, 538 n. 14, 540, 544–45, 563, 566, 586 n. 18, **681–94**
twentieth-century Arabic poets, 681–82
Umayyad poets, 681
polarity, 293, 299, 301, 306, 410, 824, 831, 837
politeness, **331–57**
polyfunctionality, 139 n. 5
polysemy, 40, 173
possessive, **695–745**, 786
pragmatic, 11, 24, 42–43, 102, 105, 107, 283, 297, 332–33, 340, 342, 506, 545, 758
prayer, 194, 224, 333, 345, 350 n. 24, 413, 463, 504, 568, 579, 772, 818
predicate, 20 n. 17, 21–22, 26, 29–30, 69–70, 76 n. 14, 87, 92, 95 n. 64, 112, 133, 269, 273–76, 280, 294–98, 304–5, 310 n. 22, 312–13, 320, 654
prefix, 55, 173, 537, 580, 585, 748, 822–23, 829–30, 846. *See also* prefix conjugation *under* conjugation
presentative, 397
preterite, 26 n. 24, **37–68**
priest, 27, 87, 90, 172, 280, 285, 317, 334, 363, 411, 578
prominence, 112, 134, 152, 198–202, 207, 209, 211, 214–15, 594, 754, 758
pronunciation, 5 n. 2, 38 n. 3, 39–40, 54, 161, 169 n. 11, 171, 195, **223–58**, 364, 376 n. 22, 387, 390–91, 393–94, 397, 399, 445, **455–78**, **577–610**, 618, 623, 625, 750, 758, 783, 813
prophecy, 18, 191 n. 147, 482, 485, 758
prophet, 193, 285, 334, 370, 375, 377, 480, 482, 591, 600
Prophets, 48–51, 190 n. 146, 191, 378–79
prose, 49, 190–92, 197, 201, 294, 306, 308 n. 20, 324–25, 505, 531–32, 545, 613 n. 3
prosody, 119–21, 198, 203, 207, 211–13, 833, 848
protasis, 9, 13, 16, 20–21, **69–97**
Provençal, 250 n. 47
proverb, 141, 497, 505 n. 15, 683 n. 513, 684–85, 688 n. 530, 692, 694
Ptolemaic, 498–99
punctuation, 114–15, 119, 121–22, 194, 585

Punic, 101, 240, 242–43, 247 n. 42
Purim, 456 n. 2
*qameṣ*, 363, 583–87, 592–93, 594 n. 35, 599
Qaro, R. Joseph, 239–40
*qaṭal*, 5, 9, 11, 19, 22–23, 26, 29, 43, 46, 72, 77 n. 17, 80, 84–85, 96. *See also* suffix conjugation *under* conjugation
*qatil*, 135, 393, 639 n. 14
*qere*, 46 n. 9, 47, 579, 600. *See also ketiv*
Qimḥi, David, 237, 585, 586 n. 17
*qotel*, 393
*qṭal*, **843–77**. *See also* suffix conjugation *under* conjugation
quantification, **259–90**, **291–329**, 409, 469, 471
quatrain, 685, 691
Qumran, 248 n. 44, 304 n. 15, 359, 361–62, 365, 370 n. 15, 412, 493 n. 4, 579, 850. *See also* Dead Sea Scrolls
Quran, 104, 193, 195, 488, 563, 589, 772, 800, 813
rabbinic, 39, **223–58**, 406–7, 411, 423, 444, 496 n. 7, 503, 581, 586, 588 n. 23, 595 n. 36, 780
Rabbūlā of Edessa, Bishop, 780
*rafe*, 586 n. 20, 589
Ramadan, 667
realis, 41–43
reciprocal, **131–56**, 530–31, 534
recitation, 38, 191 n. 148, 193, 195, 224–25, 237–38, 455 n. 2, 587, 685 n. 516, 772, 818
reduplication, 305
reflexive, 529–31, 761
religion, 192, 245 n. 39, 334, 344, 389, 411, 458, 460, 465, 480, 487, 569, 584, 588, 595–98, 691, 754, 756, 772–74, 776, 778–82, 789
resumptive, 284, 308
rhetoric, 194, 281, 351, 498, 693
rhyme, 506, 507 n. 17, 683 n. 513, 685
ritual, 343, 367 n. 9, 578–79, 594
  linguistic ritual, 343, 350
Roman, 495, 501, 752, 754, 776, 781, 783–84, 852
Rome, 226, 429
rubric, 513 n. 24, 799, 801, 803, 806, 808, 812, 815
rural, 457, 662–63, 665, 754, 756
Russian, 239, 558, 595, 695, 697–98
Saʿadya Gaon, 507, 509 n. 20

Sabaic, 148, 534 n. 6, 611–16, 619, 644 n. 24
Sabbath, 91, 224 n. 2, 456 n. 2, 828
sacred text, 191–93, 195, 215
Saddam, 682
Samaria, Samaritan, 170, **385–401**, 437, 503, 579, 756–57, 765, 843–44, 855,
Samaritan reading tradition, *see under* Hebrew reading traditions
Samson of Chinon, R., 427
sanhedrin, 232
Sargon, 494–95 n. 6
satire, 457, **681–94**
Saxonian, 560
schematisation, 10, 13, 15–17, 17 n. 13, 18, 20, 25, 30, 38, 42, 54
science, 359, 422 n. 2, 485, 498, 695, 756
scribes, 169 n. 11, 189–90, 246, 359–61, 365–67, 370–71, 378, 421, 440–41, 499, 511, 513 n. 24, 754, 784, 788, 821
script, 245 n. 38, 499, 503, 510, 511 n. 22, 579, 594, 674, 752, 757, 764, 784–85, 788, 797–99, 801, 803, 805, 807, 809, 811, 813, 815–17
scripture, 192–94, 378, 406, 580, 772
scrolls, 47, 189–90, 195 n. 152, 359, 361, 365, 496, 580 n. 7, 593
seafaring, 755
seal, 244, 496 n. 7
Second Temple, 5 n. 2, 39–40, 42, 51, 53, 55, 170, 173, 178, 182, 195 n. 152, 361, 370–71, 378, 387, 395, 411, 414
sedarim, 511
*Sefer Yeṣirah*, 504, 641
*segol*, 455–57, 623 n. 11
segolate, 208 n. 157, 363, 455
Seleucid, 776
semantic, 6, 9 n. 3, 13–14, 16–17, 24, 27, 29, 37–45, 51, 53–57, 79 n. 23, 85, 102, 107–14, 116, 122, 132–36, 137 n. 3, 152, 159, 161, 173–76, 233–34, 259 n. 1, 261, 269, 283–84, 292–94, 297, 299, 300 n. 9, 304, 308–10, 314–15, 322–25, 332–33, 346 n. 19, 368 n. 10, 373, 392–94, 404, 407–8, 410, 433, 441, 445–46, 529, 530 n. 1, 532 n. 3, 569, 589, 599, 611, 631–36, 639, 653, 654 n. 46, 655, 696, 699, 702, 713, 719 n. 48, 721, 760

Semitic, 5, 26 n. 24, 29, 101, 104, 235, 368 n. 10, 385, 446–47, 503–4, 512, 533, 535 n. 3, **555–75**, 585, 592, 600, 611–12, 615, 623, **631–60**, 758, 771, 774, 789
Central Semitic, **611–29**
Northwest Semitic, 8–9, 13, 22, 26, 119, 173, 179, 248–49, 368 n. 10, 611, 612 n. 2, 620–21, 624–26, 642 n. 21
Proto-Semitic, 5 n. 1, 26 n. 24, 42, 46, 57, 612, 614, 622 n. 9, 625–26, 636, 639–40, 642 n. 20, 652, 655
West Semitic, 26, 150, 540, 614, 617, 625, 644, 649 n. 39
Septuagint, 145, 149 n. 12, 161, 182, 249 n. 46, 322 n. 43, 346 n. 17, 369, 370 n. 15, 371–77, 406–7, 560, 562, 580, 755
*ṣere*, **455–78**, 595, 623 n. 11
Shakespeare, 488
Shalev, Meir, 487
Shema, 224, 236–38, 240, 587
*shewa*, 5 n. 2, 38 n. 2, 390–91, 579
Shiite, 691, 798
Shmuel ha-Nagid, 507–8 n. 18
*shureq*, 160 n. 2
sibilant, 209, 235–37, 247, 649 n. 39
Sicily, 101
simile, 543
Singapore, 581
Slavic, 492 n. 1, 558, 564, 567–68
sociolect, 474
sociolinguistic, 363, 365, 457–58, 473, 475
software, 99, 103 n. 1, 459
sonorant, 470, 675
Soqotra, 695
South Arabian, 613
Ancient South Arabian, 611–12 n. 1
Hadramitic, 611 n. 1
Minaic, 611 n. 1, 614
Qatabanic, 611 n. 1, 614–15
Modern South Arabian (MSAL/MSA), 613 n. 2, 641 n. 16, 645 n. 26, 646 n. 28, 647 n. 32, 650 n. 40, 672, 695, 696 n. 2, 697
Bathari, 672–73
Harsusi, 672–73
Hobyot, 641 n. 16, 646 n. 28, 650 n. 40, 653 n. 43, 672–73
Jibbali, 632 n. 2, 698 n. 4
Mehri, 613, 670–76, 678
Shehret, 672–74
Soqotri, 641, 641 n. 16, 645, 646 n. 28, **695–745**

Spain, 430, 491, 666, 750
Spanish, 144 n. 8
stanza, 486–87, 498 n. 8, 691
statistics, 21, 24 n. 22, 52, 84, 425, 455, 460–61, 465, 563, 655, 734
stative, 29, 148 n. 10, 617–18, 636
stem
C-stem, *hifʿil*, 54, 56–57, 143, 144 n. 8, 232–34, 404, 432
D-stem, 149, 536
*paʿʿel*, 225 n. 5, 859
*piʿʿel*, 392–94
Dt-stem, *hitpaʿʿel*, 152
G-stem, 132, 135, 137, 139, 141, 143–44, 147–48, 150–52
*pəʿal*, 848, 859
*qal*, 56 n. 15, 159, 166, 232, 392–94
Gt-stem, **529–53**
*itpeʿel*, 168 n. 9
N-stem, *nifʿal*, 15, **131–56**, 232, 392, 534 n. 7, 536
Št-stem, 761
stichometry, 189
stress, 46, 203, 364, 390, 462, 465, 590, 595, 616, 618, 621–23, **821–42**
subjunctive, 6, 8–9
subordination, 7, 9 n. 3, 13–14, 27–28, 111, 206, 337, 343, 348, 406, 416–18, 830
substrate, 403, 411–12, 440–41, 447, 747, 758
Sudan, 664
suffix, 15, 142, 145, 146 n. 9, 148 n. 11, 264, 267, 276, 283–84, 308, 318, 335–36, 344, 348 n. 22, 397, 409, 424–25, 431, 585, 613–15, 618–25, 632, 635–37, 695–96, 698 n. 3, 716 n. 43, 742–43, 822, 839, **843–77**. *See also* suffix conjugation *under* conjugation
Sumerian, 497, 540
Swahili, 782
syllable, 38 n. 3, 46, 192, 195, 205, 208, 223, 376 n. 22, 390, 462–65, 467–69, 471–75, 585, 592, 618, 621, 623 n. 11, 749 n. 3, 821–28, 832–41, 868
closed syllable, 464–65, 468, 473
open syllable, 462–64, 467, 469, 471–75, 868
symbolism, 539, 543 n. 20, 599
Symmachus, 372
synagogue, 52 n. 13, 191 n. 148, 456 n. 2, 568
synchronic, 174, 564, 618, 725, 847, 853
syndeton, 22, 404
synharmonism, 593

syntax, 9 n. 3, 19 n. 15, 22 n. 20, 42, 72, **99–130**, 133–34, 136, 195, 203–4, 259 n. 1, 261–63, 266, 283, 293–94, 299, 301, 304 n. 16, 314–15, 324–25, 367 n. 7, 409, 441, 445, 459, 469, 530 n. 2, 536, 556, 561, 625, 640, 664, 669, 671, 724, 734, 743, 748, 763, 765, 845, 852
Syria, Syrian, 416, 497, 588, 598, 752, 755, 757–58, 762, 772, 777, 781, 783, 788
Syriac, 137, 194–95, 365, 410–12, 496, 503–5, 510, 557, 580, 586 n. 18, 589, 592, 618, 619 n. 6, 620–21, 623–25, 645, 747, 750–54, 756–57, 772–74, 780–81, 783, 785–87, 789, 821–23, 825–27, 834, 839, 841, 860, 862–63, 865, 868, 870
Classical Syriac, 591, 595, 772, 780–82, 787, 821–22
Classical East Syriac, **821–42**
Late Classical Syriac, 821–22
East Syriac, 586 n. 18, 821, 823, 827–28, 832, 834
Jewish Syriac, 786–87
West Syriac, 586 n. 18, 618, 752, 824, 840
Syriac Christianity, 194, 503, 783
tablets, 497, 533
taboo, 577, 580–82
talisman, 813
Talmud, 227–30, 248, 345 n. 17, 424, 433, 873
Babylonian Talmud, 426, 428–29, 443, 445, 447
Palestinian Talmud, 227–30, 426, 843, 846 n. 3, 855
Tanakh, 69–70. *See also* Hebrew Bible
Tannaitic, 232, 405–6, 412 n. 5, 413, 433
Targum, 149, 164, 166–70, 181, 235, 318, 346 n. 17, 369, 372, 376, 386, 406–7, 416, 418, 641, 780, 786, 849–51, 854–55, 868–69, 872–73
Palestinian Targum, 418, 584, 873
Samaritan Targum (ST), 386 n. 3, 394, 397, 399, 843–44, 851
Targum Neofiti, 397, 851–52
Targum Onqelos, 235, 416, 585 n. 17, 595 n. 36
tautological infinitive, 535 n. 10, 556, 560–62, 565, 569–70
taxonomy, 332, 335, 339, 341, 345, 348, 351

teacher, 250, 467 n. 9, 484–85, 665, 679, 684, 751 n. 4, 823
tefillin, 405
Temple, 169–70, 494, 578
tense, 5–6, 12, 14, 19, 41, 307, 404–5, 749
terminative, 622–23
Tetragrammaton, 578–85, 587, 594, 598
theology, 371, 377–78, 496, 753, 780, 789
thetic, 19 n. 15, 69, 71, 95–96, 619 n. 6
Tibat Marqe, 843, 846–47, 849, 855, 869
Tiberian reading tradition, *see under* Hebrew reading traditions
Timothy I (Eastern-Syriac Patriarch), 756
topic, 14–15, 18, 42, 69, 140, 198–200, 202, 211, 537, 569
alternative topics, **69–97**
Torah, 47, 49–50, 54, 56, 58 n. 16, 190, 192, 387–88, 395, 399–400, 405, 417 n. 6, 418, 591. *See also* Pentateuch
Tosefta, 426–28
transitive, 117, 135, 145–46, 529, 532 n. 4, 537, 724, 818
Transjordan, 275, 436, 748, 764, 784
Tunisia, 582, 588
Turkish, 558, 665
Ugarit, 493, 540, 788
Ugaritic, 8, 22, 26, 104, 119, 368 n. 10, **529–53**, 545, 611, 613 n. 3, 614–16, 620, 622–24, 641, 642 n. 21, 643–51, 652 n. 42
urban, 457, 676, 749, 756
Urdu, 772
Vedas, 193, 195, 197
Vedic, 567
velar, 236–37
velarisation, 588, 590–91, 593–94, 599–600
vernacular, 408, 414, 418, 479, 485, 595–98, 748, 751, 752 n. 7, 756, 761–64, 772, 777, 788–89
Virgil, 243, 500
vocalisation, 39–41, 158, 160–61, 161 n. 5, 163, 165–71, 180–82, 235 n. 22, 372 n. 19, 387, 421–22, 425–26, 441, 445, 447, 456 n. 2, 459, 469, 535 n. 10, 537, 538 n. 14, 579, 585–87, 589, 615, 623, 800
vocative, 586, 589, 590, 592–94
*Vorlage*, 366, 374, 376 n. 22, 377–78, 698 n. 4, 762 n. 15, 799, 800, 804, 849
Vulgate, 369, 374, 376, 406–7

*wayyiqṭol*, 5 n. 2, 6, 19, 25 n. 24, **37–68**, 141, 173
*weqaṭal*, **5–36**, 339 n. 10
word lists, 497, 507, 674–75
Writings, 49–50, 191
Yemen, Yemeni, 581, 662–64, 666, 668–70, 674–76, 678–79, 695, 697–98
Yiddish, 479, **555–75**, 584
*yiqṭol*, 5, 14, 16–22, 24–25, 26 n. 24, 27, 29–30, 39–40, 42, 46, 54–55, 56 n. 15, 57–58, 72–73, 75, 77 n. 17, 80, 82, 84–85, 96, 173, 846, 848, 850–53, 861–4, 873. *See also* prefix conjugation *under* conjugation
*Yishuv*, 482–84
Zach, Natan, 486–87
Zionism, 479–80, 482–84, 488

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